



*"We believe that a publication such as yours is not the appropriate vehicle for teaching HIV prevention. Rather it encourages a free wheeling life style which helped bring this disease to the epidemic proportions we are now facing."*

*Carol A. Hale, Executive Director  
Permian Basin AIDS Coalition, Odessa, Texas*



*NOT SANITIZED FOR YOUR PROTECTION*

# DPN

DISEASED PARIAH NEWS #10

*Inside This Issue:  
What to Do Once  
You're Dead,  
HIV Merit Badges,  
Inkblots on Ribbons,  
Love Letter to Newt,  
And Much More!*



\$3



**JESSE HELMS:**  
*"Deliberate, disgusting, revolting conduct"*

**YOUR CRANKY EDITOR  
& IRRESISTIBLE FORCE**  
Beowulf Thorne

**YOUR HUMPY EDITOR  
& INTERNATIONAL LIAISON**  
Tom Ace

**YOUR SLEAZY EDITRIX  
& PROTECTOR OF THE STREETS**  
Michael Botkin

**YOUR GRACIOUS KEEPER  
OF THE CAMERA**  
Mod Bob

**YOUR CRAFTY ARTIST  
& DEFENDER OF TRADITIONAL MEDIA**  
Kira Od

#### ACCEPT NO SUBSTITUTES!

Diseased Pariah News is a patently offensive publication of, by, and for people with HIV disease (and their friends and loved ones). We are a forum for infected people to share their thoughts, feelings, art, writing, and brownie recipes in an atmosphere free of teddy bears, magic rocks, and seronegative guilt. We encourage people with HIV to submit material; see page 13 for more details. Your payment will be the satisfaction of being (in)famous, and contributors retain all rights to their work.

#### SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

It's easy, it's quick, it's New Wave! Just use the handy coupon on page 38. Someone already tore it off? Then send \$10.00 (US\$12 Canada, US\$20 International) for one year (4 issues) or \$3 (\$4 Canada, \$6 Int'l) for a sample issue. Checks or money orders to DPN, c/o Men's Support Center, P.O.Box 30564, Oakland, CA 94604. Please don't subscribe for more than one year at a time, for the future is mysterious. Questions? Leave a message at (510) 533-3412 (yes, it's a new phone number) or send email to [dpnmail@netcom.com](mailto:dpnmail@netcom.com). You'll be glad you did.

I S S U E N ° T E N

10

"We've got to have some common sense about a disease transmitted by people deliberately engaging in unnatural acts." —Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.)

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#### Page Two Boy

21-year-old Carson Tullio hails from sunny Southern California. Write him, c/o DPN—we're sure it'll make his day.

Would you like to be a DPN lust object? You know what to do.



# Jesse Helms Makes Me Sick

**T**HE "Senator from Philip Morris," Jesse Helms of North Carolina, made headlines back in July by attempting to derail renewal of the Ryan White act which provides hundreds of millions of dollars for AIDS care. The bill, which was sponsored by over two-thirds of the senators, including presidential hopeful Bob Dole, passed easily—but not before Helms got off a couple of pithy soundbites. Why should we pay for something people did to themselves, he asked, particularly when that activity was disgusting and perverted?

The irony of this coming from the strongest advocate of the tobacco lobby was lost on much of the nation. Should we stop research on lung cancer because many of its victims inflicted it on themselves, by smoking? And there are plenty of us who consider cigarettes disgusting, if not exactly perverted.

It makes you wonder how long Helms can keep on spouting this kind of thing before he becomes a major embarrassment to the Republican party. Word from inside the Beltway is that Helms (and also 92-year-old Strom Thurmond) is so senile that he often doesn't know what day it is and will soon be reduced to wearing adult diapers (like



Ronald Reagan, who had them specially cut down so as not to show). At a recent debate Helms referred repeatedly to Kim Sam II, the dictator of North Korea, as "Kim Sam the Second." As head of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee he should have known better, and his embarrassed handlers tried to rectify the problem for the next day's debate by spelling out the name phonetically in his briefing notes ("Kim Sam ILL"). Helms then proceeded to denounce "Kim Sam the Third."

It was this incident that convinced me that, at this point, it's just as well to have Helms around. If he were bumped off or retired, he

would be replaced by some young, vigorous non-senile representative of Philip Morris et al. But the seat is Helms' as long as he wants to keep it, and he certainly doesn't care if his personal escapades weaken his party. So if anybody out there with zero T-cells was thinking of bumping off that tobacco-soaked sack of shit as a departing act, please wait. I have a better idea, which I'll reveal in due time.

"AIDS terrorism" is a potent notion. The idea is that PWAs, despairing of our lives and enraged by our treatment, will revenge ourselves on the world by deliberately spreading our disease or by gory suicide

bombings. In practice, it has never occurred in real life, unless you count the occasional PWA charged with murder for biting an assailant.

There are a number of reasons for this. While I might consider suicide, and would certainly enjoy taking a few members of Operation Rescue or some Christian Militiamen with me, I'm not about to do it until I'm pretty sure that all my good time has been used up. But when I finally do get too worn down to want to live anymore, will I still be able to bring off such a strenuous activity as suicide bombing?

And if I do have any energy, I'd probably prefer to spend it in some more rewarding way, like writing scurrilous pieces about Operation Rescue and the Christian Militia.

Finally, I don't think that terrorism is a very useful political tool for the left in America. Let's face it, all the gun nuts are right-wingers. If orchid growing or interior design had terrorist potential the gay community would be quite formidable, but the fact is most fags can't tell an assault rifle from a vacuum cleaner. And although the right seems to get away with all sorts of murderous violence—witness Operation Rescue's unimpeded fire-bombing campaign against women's health clinics for the past two years—any sign of militancy from the left routinely brings down massive government intervention and repression.

A recent situation in France illustrates this very clearly. A small group of fundamentalists (or someone imitating such a group) set off a few bombs in subway wastebaskets, killing several innocent bystanders. The bombers no doubt feel very powerful from the attention they've received and at the chaos they've

churned up. The government responded with a massive crackdown on all Muslims and non-whites. Algerians are afraid to leave their houses for fear of mob violence or police harassment. Several liberal Muslim refugees, fleeing fundamentalist executioners, are being denied visas and left to die. The net effect of the bombing campaign has been to make the lives of several million Muslims in France a living hell, and to end up justifying the government's repressive measures.

So if the bombers' goal was to change France's racist policies or to improve the lot of Muslims, they failed miserably. If their goal was to make trouble and feel good, they may well consider themselves a success. But I would argue that you can still make trouble and feel good without causing all those negative side effects.

After all, if some PWA were to blow up himself and Helms, the Republicans would be relieved of a growing embarrassment, the Christian Coalition would get a nice martyr, and the gay and HIVer communities would get a massive police crackdown. So please, please, don't even think about it. There are better ways to accomplish your goals.

The notion came to me the other day when I tossed my cookies at one of the finest restaurants in town. I'm increasingly subject to these random waves of nausea, and find them rather embarrassing. No matter how much you explain to a friend that it's the drugs you're on, they can't help but take it as a criticism when you vomit a meal they've prepared all over the kitchen table. These spells are most likely when I have a full stomach, particularly of spicy

## DAMN YOU!

*We know where you are, you feckless sinners. You're in a bookstore, or maybe leaning over a coffee table, desperately trying to read the contents of a DPN which you have no intention of paying for! Heavy hangs over your head, for you risk being struck blind by the vengeful ghosts of our deceased editors, who'll toss their ashes in your face. Avoid this terrible fate—subscribe to DPN. Diseased Pariah News costs only \$10 for the next four issues, \$12 Canada and \$20 international (U.S. currency please). Our plain brown wrapper and irregular publishing schedule will thwart the nosiest of neighbors. Send filthy lucre to DPN, P.O.Box 30564, Oakland, CA 94604. Salvation is close at hand.*



## GLOSSARY

In case some of you cherished readers are new to the wonderful world of HIV, here's a key to the alphabet soup of acronyms you're likely to encounter in these pages.

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| <b>ADC</b>      | AIDS dementia complex                                 |
| <b>AIDS</b>     | Who's reading this to you, anyway?                    |
| <b>ARC</b>      | like Brontosaurus excelsis, officially disinvented    |
| <b>AZT</b>      | azidothymidine  |
| <b>CDC</b>      | Centers for Disease Control and prevention            |
| <b>CMV</b>      | cytomegalovirus; cerebritis, retinitis, pneumonitis   |
| <b>C&amp;BT</b> | cock and ball torture ( <i>oops, wrong glossary</i> ) |
| <b>ddC</b>      | dideoxycytidine                                       |
| <b>ddl</b>      | dideoxyinosine  |
| <b>EBV</b>      | Epstein-Barr virus                                    |
| <b>HIV</b>      | human immunodeficiency (or immunotropic) virus        |
| <b>HPV</b>      | human papilloma virus                                 |
| <b>HSV</b>      | herpes simplex virus                                  |
| <b>ITP</b>      | idiopathic thrombocytopenic purpura                   |
| <b>KS</b>       | Kaposi's sarcoma                                      |
| <b>MAC</b>      | Mycobacterium avium complex (also MAI)                |
| <b>NIH</b>      | as far as the CDC is concerned, Not Invented Here     |
| <b>OHL</b>      | oral hairy leukoplakia                                |
| <b>PCP</b>      | Pneumocystis carinii pneumonia                        |
| <b>PGL</b>      | persistent generalized lymphadenopathy                |
| <b>PID</b>      | pelvic inflammatory disease                           |
| <b>PML</b>      | progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy            |
| <b>TB</b>       | tuberculosis  |

food, and are often sparked by taking a pill. It goes down wrong, I gag, and up comes dinner.

So, one arranges a lobbying meeting with the reactionary legislator of your choice. You'll probably have to use a cover story, since even the Uncle Tom's Cabin Gay Republicans can't get in the door these days. Say you're from Christians for Forced Sterilization, or the Tobacco for Kids Coalition and you'll probably have no trouble.

About an hour before the scheduled interview, stop for a large heavy spicy meal of low quality food—I recommend cheap Indian—and take as many nausea-inducing drugs as you have. Personally, I take six meds that would make any normal person sick to their stomach.

Then, when you're introduced to the reactionary big-wig, quickly pop your "trigger pill." Any large awkward pill likely to get caught on the way down is good for this role.

I find the double-strength Bactrim tablet ideal—its large chalky bulk and its deeply beveled edge make it almost impossible to get down. I occasionally fantasize about the punishments its designer should face in Hell—an awful sickness that could only be temporarily assuaged by taking a hundred Bactrims in just one minute.

Let him (or her) go hacking and gagging through eternity, like I do every night when I force one down.

So I'd declaim something like "Senator Dole, I have a personal message for you from America's People With AIDS" and pop the Bactrim—and promptly vomit a stomach load of vile filth on the creep.

Your victim will no doubt find the experience extremely unpleasant

and I, for one, would take as much joy and satisfaction from such an encounter as I would from blowing us both up. They can't even charge me with anything, really, since I can always claim that it was a spontaneous and uncontrollable event. "I'm just a poor, sick man," I'd sob to the cameras. "I can't believe they're saying I did this on purpose. Don't they have any compassion for the dying?"

There's no evidence that AIDS can be passed by vomit, or even much theoretical reason to think it could be. Of course, biting can't transmit HIV either, and several PWAs have been charged with murder for biting someone. But biting is clearly an aggressive act, intended to harm, while vomiting is (usually) an involuntary response to distress. I'll argue, quite simply and literally, that Bob Dole—or Jesse Helms, or whoever—made me sick.

While my target would get a certain amount of sympathy, I think he would also come in for a great deal of ridicule. And I'd not only get my sound-bite in the media, but I'd live to appreciate it.

After all, these people do make us sick, or at least impede us from getting better or staying alive, which is just as bad. Let's just spread the sickness around a little. If my stomach gets any worse I'll start attending Republican campaign rallies, and puke violently on the supporters of Buchanan, Gramm, and Dornan. I'll spray wildly and then loudly apologize "I'm sorry, I can't help it; I've got AIDS!" and watch while they scatter in panic.

So many say, "Jesse Helms makes me sick." Maybe we should put our money where our mouth is and show the world instead of just telling them about it. —M.B.

## What To Do Once You're

# DEAD

**A Practical Guide for the HIV-positive  
by Tim Haggerty**

**I**N THIS, the second decade of the (yawn) epidemic, every conceivable topic surrounding AIDS has been covered. Noble gay men. Pitiful AIDS children. Transfusion cases. Freak heterosexual transmission. Hopeful treatment options. Long-term survivors. Spiritual awakenings. Dietary supplements.

Let's face facts. The reason for this endless stream of necrophiliac journalism has nothing to do with America's interest in or pity for the HIV-positive; it has everything to do with our insatiable curiosity about painful, lingering death. Behind every piece of tripe that glories in "the invincibility of the human spirit" lurks the morbid question of how the (uninfected) readers would comport themselves in the same situation. Since most of our subscribers, however, are already living out their Ali-McGraw-in-the-last-reel-of-Love-Story fantasies, there is only one place left to let the mind wander. Yes, it's time to tackle the in-

evitable: how to act once you're dead. Of course, the following only skims the surface, but at least it's a beginning.

Surprisingly, being dead has its advantages. If it hasn't happened before, your name will finally get into print. Hopefully, those who you leave behind won't end up sending a teary 100-word blurb to the local bar rag that says "he went up to a higher level of consciousness" or something equally moronic, but then again, you won't be in any position to complain, will you?

Dead can be much less expensive. Once you get over the initial expenses, your day-to-day maintenance will go way down. You don't need to eat—and you don't have to worry about your weight loss! Your medical bills disappear, and you'll be moving to a much smaller place.

Dead is stress-free. Your career goals are now meaningless, and any relationship problems between you and your families, friends, and lovers disappear—literally overnight. Now

your big challenge is to adjust to an existence that revolves around decomposition.

Dead is adventurous. You don't get out a lot, so if you're lucky enough to go clubbing, don't be surprised if people react to you differently. Unless you're part of the very newly dead, you'll be preserved already, so you won't need to drink. Besides, you can't swallow.

Dead can be sexy. If someone tries to pick you up, you'll find certain aspects of your date less stressful than before. Since you're dead, so is the virus. No more of that endless "safe sex negotiation" that ends with you standing alone with a limp dick. Oh sure, unless rigor mortis has set in, you'll be limp, but nobody is going to get mad at you for just lying there.

So remember—when you're blue, or the next time you're hooked up to a catheter, a whole new world awaits you. Sure it'll be different, and sure, you'll be a corpse, but that doesn't mean it all has to be dull. ☐

# Letters to the Editor(s)

DEAR CRANKY, HUMPY, & SLEAZY:

I have received two DPNs and love them both, as do most of my friends. It is so important in all of the pain and sadness of AIDS to be able to laugh—your magazine provides that laughter.

As I said, most of my friends enjoy DPN, except for one person. He got really pissed, as if I had written these things, and has never spoken to me again. Fuck him!!! But I guess it is difficult for her to speak with that Kotex in her mouth. Everybody wanted to borrow my DPNs until I finally got sick of it and now I just tell everyone to get their own damn subscription.

I saw in your interview with Larry Kramer that you don't get enough feedback. By the way, we hate Larry and do not feel indebted to that cretin at all. As a matter of fact, we feel he is in debt to everyone who was ever poisoned by that toxic drug AZT, so we hope that scathing fag-burns in hell. I can relate to not getting any feedback because I put out a client newsletter for an AIDS project that has two hundred clients, and I rarely get any feedback at all—it is very frustrating!

We love AIDS Barbie, we are envious of her beautiful lesions! We think that she probably got the virus from her secret sexual liaisons with GI Joe, who is a long term non-pro-

gressor. GI Joe still has over 1200 T-cells, which pisses AIDS Barbie off! Everybody knows what a slut GI Joe is, and how much he loves getting fucked! Of course Ken is just simply despondent over the whole situation. He's angry about AIDS Barbie and GI Joe's violent sexual history, but is secretly happy as he has continued to test negative despite years of repeated exposure to GI Joe's toxic semen.

Oh yes, we love AIDS Barbie and have taken it one step further by getting a mannequin and naming her Polly Portacath. She has a hospital bed and I've fixed up the spare bedroom for her, where she is very happy and well cared for! All of my friends bring their mannequins over on Sunday afternoons for a support group and potluck dinner, and then we trade drugs.

DPN has gotten us through some gloomy times, and has our imaginations working overtime. I'm sure you will be hearing more from me and maybe my cheap-ass friends will get their own subscriptions.

JOE IRVIN  
SPRINGFIELD, MISSOURI

P.S. I would *love* to be your centerfold boy, but I took your advice to get fat and not die!!

*Our Ken and G.I. Joe have their own stories to tell (see the back cover of this issue). —Ed.*

TO THE EDITOR:

Am I a Shit?

This may seem like a stupid question. Of course I am. But I think I am even a bigger shit now than ever. You see, I haven't told my boyfriend that I'm HIV positive. Actually, it's worse than that. I also have AIDS (for almost two years now) and I've sort of neglected to mention that also. I really meant to tell him, but the right moment never presented itself. (Don't you hate when that happens?)

I never thought I would ever date anyone again in my life. My lover of ten years died two years ago, and I was diagnosed one month later. Within a month I was on chemotherapy for malignant lymphoma, had no hair and started to lose what would eventually be sixty pounds (I wasn't fat to begin with). I thought that would be pretty much it for the dating scene. I never guessed that two years later I would have been alive, much less had gained all the weight back, grown all my hair back and look perfectly healthy. Since I finished chemotherapy and radiation therapy, I have only had one minor case of PCP and one minor incident of shingles. I haven't even had a cold since last September! I had almost forgotten I was ever sick!

When I walked into the bar that night two months ago, the last thing

on my mind was meeting someone. All I wanted to do was to have a few drinks in normal (gay) surroundings. I had met a group of people I work with for drinks (who don't know I'm gay or have AIDS) in an upscale strait bar where all the losers in town go to see and be seen—you know the kind of place I'm talking about, they're all the same. I know, I know, what was I doing THERE? Well, I don't know either, which is why I went immediately to a gay bar afterwards. I figured I'd have one drink—two tops. I was still in my suit from work and this handsome young man walked over from the other side of the bar and asked me if it was a Brooks Brothers suit that I was wearing. I promised myself there would be no sex. And there wasn't—for three days.

I REALLY like him, but it's also REALLY awkward. Things have progressed WAY beyond the point where I could just casually say "Oh, by the way, I forgot to tell you..." I should have told him long before now. But, I'm thinking about not telling him at all. It's not like I'm endangering him because we only have safe sex (if you can even call it sex). He has made it a point to tell me on more than one occasion that he is negative and gets tested every six months. In fact, he wants me to fuck him (with a rubber), but I won't do it. I'm really surprised he's not sick of it by now because the sex is really boring. I know I am—but it's not like I have a choice. I've even managed to hide my pharmacy when he comes over. I'm in constant fear that I've left something out in plain sight—a pill bottle, a doctor bill, a DPN, etc.

I know this will only work until I have to go to the hospital, or start

getting lesions, or have to have an inline catheter, or he notices my night sweats when we're in bed. But, I figure I'll cross that bridge when I get to it. I'm really amazed that he's never asked me. He has asked me if I've been tested, and I told him that I was three years ago. But, I never told him the results, nor did he ask.

So, am I a shit? And, if there are any lawyers out there reading this, could I get sued for doing this? I never thought I'd ever get any again, and he's got a beautiful dick. If a "twinky" defense will work, that certainly should!

NAME AND CITY WITHHELD  
AT THE READER'S REQUEST

*You answered your own question about whether you're a shit, but I'm not going to agree with you. Maybe you did something less than wonderful, but I don't see how terming yourself a 'shit' is going to help you do any better in the future. I'm more inclined to discuss your experience with the goal of learning from it, rather than concentrating on how awful you are.*

*It sounds like you've had safe sex, and I have to commend you for that. But—did you in effect lie to him when you said you'd been tested but didn't mention the result? That's hard to say; I wasn't there at the time.*

*You're definitely not alone. Most of us have regrets of one kind or another about how we've handled these sorts of situations. Being saddled with tough choices is part of the special horror of the HIV experience.*

*When I first found out about my serostatus, I figured it would scare people away from me forever—and in some cases, I was right. One "friend" of about ten years told me he felt I was too much of a health hazard to be welcome at his house any more. Yes, it took*

## Give DPN to a friend!

*Like syphilis, Diseased Pariah News is the gift that keeps on giving. Do you know someone who's having a hard time dealing with an HIV diagnosis? Or a troubled friend, lover, or parent of someone with HIV? Buy them a subscription and tell them to sit down, shut up, and get over it! Diseased Pariah News is low in sodium, and is the ideal gift for all occasions. For a "year" of DPN (well, four issues), send \$10 (US\$12 in Canada, US\$20 elsewhere) to DPN, c/o Men's Support Center, P.O. Box 30564, Oakland CA 94604. We'll even forward your birthday, Xmas, or sympathy cards with the first issue. As always, please don't subscribe for more than one year at a time, as the future is mysterious.*



*"I regret to say that we at the FBI are powerless to act in the case of oral-genital intimacy,*

*unless it has in some way obstructed interstate commerce." —J. Edgar Hoover*

a while before I started to feel comfortable telling people I was positive.

From my own informal observations, I'd say that most people become more open about their serostatus with time. It's partly a kind of laziness; it's too much trouble to keep it secret.

I also learned that it's pointless to ask people to promise not to tell anyone about my serostatus. They'll promise, but they don't really mean it.

Only a couple people have ever asked me about how and when I tell sex partners about being positive. I think lots of people are curious to know, but most of them think it's too personal a question to ask.

The situation seems to be uncomfortable for you—if I were in your shoes, I'd tell him soon. As you pointed out, the longer you wait, the stickier it gets. I know, picking the right moment can be a bitch. Just when he's about to come is probably not the best time.

If he does sue you, please let us know how it turns out. The details should make for some very interesting reading.

This sounds like something our readers would have opinions about, so let's ask them. Do you have a general policy about when to tell your partners? Are there any instances you'd like to tell us about where you came to regret the way you handled telling someone? What kinds of reactions have you gotten when you've told people?

—Tommy (YHE).

DEAR DPN STUDS,

Along with my hefty order for propaganda materials, I felt compelled to drop you a brief note of praise and deep thoughts.

As an HIVer wannabe, I value your publication because it has done a great deal to help me get over my own special brand of melodramatic,

crying-jag, seronegative survival guilt. I relish the snotty sarcasm, bitchy cultural critiques and extremely fuckable centerfold boys you manage to pack into every issue—when you can be bothered to pull your dicks out of whatever holes you are stuffing them into long enough to publish. (For now I'm ordering back issues; do me and I'll subscribe.) You publish out of Oakland, California, I understand.

Only a couple people have ever asked me about how and when I tell sex partners about being positive. I think lots of people are curious to know, but most of them think it's too personal a question to ask.

So, herein, some friendly advice. Bend over, this won't hurt a bit.

[1] More pics of cocks, preferably close-ups of nice, firm, erect ones dribbling semen. Get your centerfold and Page Two boys hard before you take their pictures. Better yet, shoot them shooting.

[2] Hire and pay me a ridiculously large salary. I am envious of the fun you all must be having in putting together DPN.

[3] Keep up the honesty and fierceness. Along with often making me laugh out loud, and sometimes getting my gigantic phallus semi-hard (See [1] above), DPN always makes me think. That's almost as wonderful as having my dick sucked all day long. Sometimes better. DPN needs to be required reading for every closet-case, friggy-nell, Republican-voting douche-bag in D.C., as well as 95 percent of the "Democrats".

—Tommy (YHE).

you, not at you or for you. [Huh? —Ed.] Continue to rag long and hard and deep on our methods (we like it like that), but don't ever doubt our motives. [Huh? —Ed.]

[5] Of course you'll want to print this erudite essay as a letter to the editor. Go right ahead, but don't even think about one of your oh-so-predictable, pissy, last-word, hack-me-to-shreds editor's notes! I used to be a journalist, buddy. I can fuck with your mail, ruin what little credit rating you have left, and/or get you signed up for every damn music and book club there is. If you want a cat fight, bitch, you'll get one.

with affection,

CASEY MILLER  
DALLAS, TEXAS

P.S. I'm not originally from Texas, but I'm fitting right in, don't you think?

Thanks for the, uh, kind words.

You are the first reader to offer to subscribe if we would only "do" you. Thanks—but as your "gigantic phallus" only gets "semi-hard" from DPN, we regret that we'll have to pass on your offer.

A number of circumstances have been responsible for our less-than-prompt publishing schedule of late, but leaving our dicks in various holes for too long hasn't been one of them.

We get our mail in Oakland, but we publish out of someplace even cooler.

We'll pass along your photo-layout suggestions to future centerfold and Page Two models.

Hiring you at a ridiculously large salary is decidedly not in the cards.

We've never spent any time in Texas, so we can't say how well you're fitting in—but we'll take your word that you're doing just fine. —Ed.

# A Love Letter to Newt

by Paul Walker

Sphincter of the House  
looking for hot free-market  
action. Blow my Republican  
[elephant] dick while I read  
Toffler aloud. Send detailed

Dear Stud Master Leather  
Daddy Newt (Boxholder 1600):

In response to your personal ad ISO submissive life partner, you are the man of my dreams. I will do anything to fulfill all your needs. I will give you every cent of my Social Security disability checks. You can tie me to your bed and call me Hillary (oh please please). Just thinking about you makes me so crazy I sometimes stay in bed all day, stunned.

I am the only one for you, sir. I understand your deepest passions. I too fantasize about putting on a pinstripe suit and taking money from the unemployed, elderly, and disabled. I too dream of selling books to publishers who need favors from me. I too long to visit orphanages full of poor children and prisons full of black men. What particularly endears you to me is your avoidance of AIDS issues. Aren't you just weary of all those sick people whining and complaining and clamoring for money and assistance and a cure? I

know I am. (You mentioned in your ad that you are involved with Congress. If you know any Congresspeople, maybe you can encourage them to stop pussyfooting around with those sick people. I mean, if you stop funding them, they'll all die out soon enough and no one will have to worry about them.)

But, my beautiful Master Newt, I finally knew you were meant for me when you described divorcing your first wife on her hospital bed. What kind of special courage must that have taken? Dare I call it noble? I hope you'll love me at least as well.

As requested in your ad, I'm enclosing an 8 x 10 of myself in a scenario I know you'll like. The sling is mine.

Please, Daddy Newt, call me soon. I can't keep my desire for you in check much longer. You are always in my thoughts and dreams. Please call me soon and say you will be mine forever. I want to be the one to give you what you so richly deserve.

Love,  
Your Number One Fan

P.S. Do you know Jesse Helms? I'd love to meet him and give him something very special. ☀

## GET FAT, don't die!

Bill Brent, the esteemed editor of Black Sheets, notes that the very act of reading our recipes gives him heartburn. Well, Bill, this one's for you.

### Patricia Mae's Most Revolting Oysters

1 quart avocado oil (palm kernel oil or coconut oil will do in a pinch)

3 eggs

1/2 cup heavy cream

2 cups bread crumbs

24 plump, shucked oysters  
drawn butter

Get out the fry daddy and heat the avocado oil. If you're using a stove-top, heat the oil until just short of smoking. Thoroughly beat the eggs and add the cream. Dip the oysters in the batter, dredge in the bread crumbs, and deep fry until a golden brown. Drain and serve with drawn butter for dipping.

Saturated fats, gall bladder attacks; serve this dish to relatives that you don't like. While you barely touch your portion (HIV-induced nausea, y'know), you can feel satisfied knowing they'll be dead by morning. When confronted by the police, you can blame it all on dementia. Enjoy.

### Bananas à la Biff

1/4 cup unsalted butter

1/3 cup brown sugar

1/4 cup Gran Marnier

4 big bananas, peeled and sliced

Vanilla ice cream

Melt the butter in a skillet and add the brown sugar, stirring until the lumps have disappeared. Add the Gran Marnier (do not substitute orange curaçao, it is a sin) and stir until the syrup is bubbly. Add the banana slices and simmer until tender. Serve warm over ice cream.

GET FAT, don't die!

# The Well-Fed Welfare Queen

Poverty is an ugly thing. Poverty means holes in your socks. Poverty means keeping unsavory company in the waiting room of the public health clinic. At its worst, poverty means picking through garbage cans for dinner.

Although I've never actually gone dumpster diving, there have been a few times in my life when I came close. One impoverished episode was (of course) during college, when I was a starving student at the University of California at Santa Cruz. The town is surrounded by agricultural communities, and big trucks laden with fresh produce would lumber through. On lucky days, the trucks would roll over bumps on a poorly maintained block of Highway One, where the open carts would lose a few pounds of green beans, carrots, or maybe tomatoes. This same block was on the way to school, so I got to check it nearly every day. A little dirty after being scooped out

of the gutter, but hey, it was free. Meanwhile, a downtown grocery store was kind enough to gently stack crates of bruised and therefore unsellable apples and pears next to the proverbial dumpster, no messy diving required. Unlike the cornucopia in the gutter, I had to wade with my fellow indigents for these goodies.

These days I'm fortunate, my last employer's long-term disability plan keeps me from wondering where my next meal is coming from. Nevertheless, keeping fed and well-nourished is a serious issue for all pariahs on a limited or non-existent income. In the following pages, I'd like to discuss ways of stretching your food dollar by a variety of methods, be they moral, amoral, or immoral. You get to decide what's best for you.

## What's for free?

Free is a nice thing for a welfare queen. Free means there's enough

money left to buy medication, or that you can go out for cappuccino with friends.

Food stamps are one of the first free things that come to mind. These are coupons minted by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, redeemable for food items only—no booze or tobacco. To receive food stamps at no charge, you must be really poor. For the less-than-really-poor, food stamps may be purchased at a discount, say \$75 buys you \$100 worth. It turns out that most of us are less than less-than-really-poor, and can't get food-stamps at all. One can, however,

buy food stamps from someone who does receive them, for as little as 20¢ on the dollar. You can now go to bed with a full tummy, and your client now has the hard cash necessary to score those forbidden and self-destructive cigarettes and booze. Needless to say, this has both legal and karmic consequences. On the other hand, food stamps are nearly as fungible as

cash to the grocer, and capture is unlikely. Some towns offer pan-handling vouchers that socially responsible citizens may give to beggars, with similar redemption restrictions. These too may be exchanged for cash at a discount.

The USDA also makes surplus food available. "Surplus" food results from farm subsidies, where the Fed buys huge quantities of agricultural staples to keep farm prices stable. In abundant years most of these foodstuffs end up in the landfill, but some are graciously doled out to the poor. Whole milk winds up as surplus cheese and butter, but sometimes powdered milk can be had. I've tried all three on several occasions, and let me tell you that the first two are really grody. I can't help but imagine some defense contractor rendering the milk between orders for napalm or nerve gas. The dry milk, on the other hand, is okay and makes a good nutritional supplement. Similarly, the Fed-bread should be avoided if at all possible, but the bulk flour is usually just like the store-bought item.

Next comes good old-fashioned charity. If you have problems accepting handouts from blue-haired elderly ladies, remember that accepting a donation with dignity is as gracious an act as giving it. General purpose poor-pantries usually cough up the products of their canned food drives, which can seem a little bland after a while. For a better deal, some AIDS organizations offer a weekly bag of groceries more likely to include fresh produce and milk. The American Cancer Society here in San Francisco has been known to give out cases of Carnation Instant

Breakfast, though they often ran out of the chocolate flavor. The best deal of all are groups like Project Open Hand, which delivers hot dinners for a sliding fee scale. Open Hand, in turn, relies on the charity of grocery stores and restaurants. The drawback is ground round, and lots of it. Where there's ground round, there's meatloaf. Not just any meatloaf, but hearty meatloaf provençal, Cajun meatloafettes, or teriyaki meatloaf kabobs. They do try, and at least it's not Hamburger Helper.

## Land of the cost-conscious shoppers

The world of the checkout line is more complicated than the bread line. The most obvious "savings opportunity" is the coupon. (Why am I even bothering to mention so basic and universal an item? Because there are a few things you might not have heard of.) Beware, coupons are devices to sell a product, not to promote your welfare. Too many people fail to ask themselves, "Do I really use instant mashed potatoes?" If so, do you regularly use the deluxe variety, which is probably what the coupon is for. Obviously, 25¢ off a brand that costs \$1.00 more than what you normally buy is no bargain.

It is possible to subvert the system and direct the greed back to its source. You see, not only does the store get reimbursed from the manufacturer for the face value of the coupon, but a small handling fee is paid as well. Therefore, the store has little incentive to look very closely at the coupons submitted. If you wait for the total to be rung before handing over your coupons,

## What's in a name?

Despite adages to the contrary, we all judge books by their covers. Accordingly, there are seemingly no limits people will go to in the pursuit of making that all-important first impression. *Location* has always mattered; businesses and people routinely go out of their way to secure impressive-sounding addresses and phone numbers.

With the advent of the Internet as the universally acknowledged Important Place To Be, the rush is on for catchy-sounding *domain names*—the email analogues of place names. After all, there are only so many cute, short, memorable names to go around. Speculators are snapping up domain names, hoping to sell the rights to them some day for whatever the market will bear.

By convention, Internet domain names for US businesses usually end in .com (for "commercial"). If we at DPN really cared about getting ourselves a classy Internet address, we've already missed a few opportunities. aids.com and dpn.com were taken in 1995 (the latter belongs to a software company in Las Vegas). death.com was registered in '94.

Although nothing shocks us, we must say we are impressed by the domain-name-grabbing spree Procter and Gamble went on earlier this year. In August of 1995, P&G registered headache.com, toiletpaper.com, diarrhea.com, and who knows how many other valuable pieces of electronic real estate.

For those who want to stake their claims, plenty of fun domain names are still up for grabs. Most HIV-related OI names are still unclaimed (hairy-leukoplakia.com and shingles.com, for example.) Go ahead—be the first one on your block!

## About DPN...

The issue of DPN you hold in your hot little hands was designed using nothing but the next-to-latest digital publishing technology. That's right, we haven't upgraded our equipment since the last issue, and with the fast-moving nature of the computer industry (and our leisurely publishing schedule) that means everything we have is now old hat and thus no longer worth describing in detail.

But—we're still techno-weenies and we just love it when contributors submit to us electronically. We can accept Mac or DOS floppies (plain ASCII files if possible) and most kinds of tape (check with us before sending tapes). Email is cool; we're [dpnmail@netcom.com](mailto:dpnmail@netcom.com).

If you don't have a computer, don't despair—you can write your articles with a crayon and we'll use 'em if we like 'em. If at all possible, don't send anything that you really need to have returned, and as always—please be patient. We're all dying, demented, or lazy (or possibly all three).

The editors would like to thank all those who helped make DPN #10 possible: Daniel Bao (your token oppressed non-pariah of color), Kira Od (awesome cover and p. 36 illustrations, Kira), Jay Moman, Steve Wilson, Sasha Vodnik, and of course all who submitted material—irrespective of whether it wound up in this issue or not.

"No Place Like Home" and "Fun With Buddy's Meds" are from the series "The Buddy Poems" by Lesléa Newman, author of *Heather Has Two Mommies* and other good stuff.

the checker is unlikely to verify that they match the items purchased. Obviously this won't keep you fed for free, since even the densest checker is likely to notice the disparity between a fistful of coupons and a small bag of groceries. Warning: do not attempt this with any coupons bearing a bar code. The checker may not be keep track, but the laser scanner will. One last coupon idea. Writing an obsequious letter of appreciation to the manufacturer of your favorite items may get you some thank-you coupons that are more generous than the ones you find in the papers.

Another savings opportunity revolves around slightly damaged packaging. Americans really like their consumer goods to look pretty, and as a result, only the Japanese spend more on packaging than we do. When the cost of the box exceeds that of the contents, it's not surprising that a dented container translates as a serious loss of value. Dented cans may end up being marked half-off, while the contents are unaffected. (Dented cans are not an indication of botulism. However, beware of cans that are bulging.) A torn box or crushed corner is also benign, since the product probably has an inner bag to maintain freshness.

Sometimes you can do better than scrounge the reject pile of your local store and go to a place that specializes in dented cans, crushed boxes, lopsided labels, and esthetically challenged produce. Moreover, you get the thrill of seeing items that are normally encountered only in the restaurant trade; a 20 lb. can of kiwi fruit makes a memorable housewarming present.

A couple of my college buddies

point out that you can go a step further and dent your own cans. This is done by placing the side of the can against the edge of the grocery shelf and leaning on it. Appearing to read the label of something held in your other hand will camouflage this action. Leave the can behind, and it appears in the bargain bin the next day. Similarly, breaking the cellophane wrapping of a steak will cause the beef to turn an alarming color around the rent. It's actually grey, but it often looks green when surrounded by the normal red of the unsullied portion. It too will end up in the discount area. Warning: do not use this cost cutting technique with any other meat besides beef. I was never able to figure out how my friends had the time to do this surreptitious sabotage, purchase the deflowered merchandise the following day, go to classes full-time and do homework. The closest I have come to this is to carry a small pen-knife and cut off the unwanted stems from produce like broccoli or asparagus.

Finally, there's the new secular temple of the nineties, the bulk-food or warehouse store. These places are great if you have a small warehouse of your own to stow these bulky treasures, otherwise forget it. I go to Costco every week just for the amazingly cheap gallons of Odwalla orange juice. The tubs of frozen lasagna do well for parties, and the meat, well, half a cow will fit in the refrigerator somehow. Lately, the one bulk item I have no trouble using up by the pallet is toilet paper, whose household scarcity is directly proportional to my declining T-cells. *Bon appétit.*

—B.T.

## Truly Tutti Fruiti Flies

by Lou Ceci

THOSE CLEVER RASCALS at the National Institutes of Health are at it again. Through some clever genetic manipulations, they have managed to create queer fruit flies. Or fruit fly fruits. Whatever.

What Drs. Ward Odenwald and Shang-Ding Zhang of the NIH did was transplant a gene that causes the normally red eyes of fruit flies to come out white. By making the alteration in male embryonic cells, Drs. Odenwald and Zhang produced adult male fruit flies with reduced serotonin in their tiny little brains and reduced interest in copulating with females in their tiny little dicks.

But they still exhibited a keen interest in giving a flying fuck. According to a report on the research by Larry Thompson published in Time magazine, when the altered male and unaltered female fruit flies were released into gallon-sized glass jars, the males would ignore the females. Instead, they would "link up end-to-end in big circles or in long, winding rows that look like winged conga lines. As the buzz of the characteristic fruit fly 'love song' fills the air, the males repeatedly lurch forward and rub genitals with the next ones in the line."

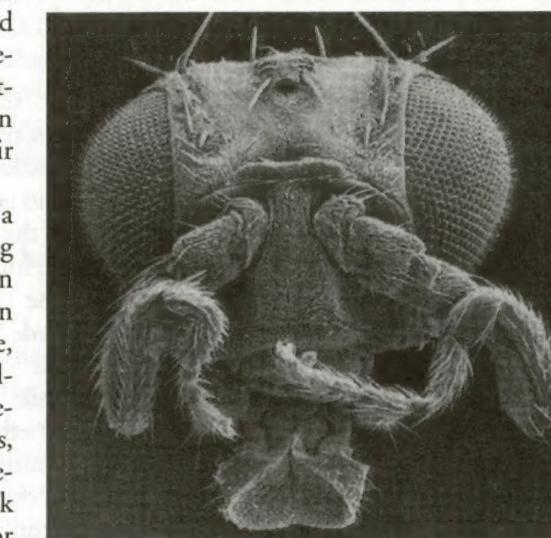
Eh voilà, say the Docs, we have created gay flies. An interesting conclusion since a similar gene exists in human beings.

There is an important caveat that one should keep in mind when reading about research like this. It's the same caveat George Bernard Shaw

said should be written in large letters over the door of every church: "IMPORTANT IF TRUE."

Here are a few of the considerations that seem to have slipped by the NIH.

First, there was no pre-test to determine the sexual orientation of the flies before the genetic alteration. Sure, they may have behaved heterosexually, but there could be any number of causes for that, such as religious



beliefs (especially those professed by their parents), peer pressure, the desire to have children, and a lack of spontaneity engendered by having beings 300 times their size peering at them through the walls of an enormous glass jar.

The importance of this last factor should not be overlooked. For all we know, these flies were all a bunch of flaming queens, but were simply being discreet (or possibly Republican). Virtually nothing is known about the

private lives of experimental animals outside the laboratory.

Second, the NIH scientists have confused sexual behavior with sexual orientation—a forgivable lapse, especially if they've been watching much daytime television. But males who copulate with males are not necessarily homosexuals, just as males who copulate with females are not necessarily heterosexual (especially on daytime television).

To be truly homosexual, fruity flies must demonstrate other characteristics, like color-coordinating their wardrobes to match their eyes. Not just buzzing that famous "love song," but arranging it for TTBB chorus with piano and flute accompaniment. Forming political action committees. Bickering.

Finally, though the Time report is considerably more frank about the sexual behavior of invertebrates than Time usually is about the sex lives of species closer to homo, there is still an exasperating lack of detail. The only sexual activity reported is that the males "link up end-to-end." If this is indeed their only sexual activity, it exhibits a remarkable lack of inventiveness, once again arguing against the altered males being truly homosexual. However, the formation of "conga lines" is, perhaps, sufficiently retro to argue otherwise.

In short, the National Institutes of Health have again proven the ability of government funded basic research to provide opportunities for scientists and lay persons alike to exercise and validate their prejudices.

# Inkblots

by Glenn Gaylord



When she hears the word AIDS, she thinks of shoulder pads.

**A**NOTHER FABULOUS OUTFIT, another fund-raising event. Who is it this time. Liza? Barbra? Bette? She hopes the suits won't go on for too long about how many bags of groceries the money raised will provide...it would cut into the entertainment factor.

She does get all misty-eyed when she thinks about poor Halston. Although she didn't know him well, she did chat him up at a benefit once and talked about kitchen utensils, good framing shops, that sort of thing. "He was so charming!" she'd always say in hushed, reverential terms.

Other than that swift brush with fame, she never knew any other "AIDS Victims" as she is known to call them. Oh sure, she'd hugged the occasional baby at a Pediatric AIDS event—"The real innocents," she'd say. But it's hard, and perhaps risky, to embrace a gay man with lesions

when you're sporting a dramatic and backless Valentino gown. Anyhow, she didn't travel in those circles. Men with lesions could not usually afford \$10,000-a-plate dinners, and if they could, they at least had the decency to cover them up with a light foundation.

Don't get her wrong. She thinks AIDS is a terrible disease, and she wouldn't wish it upon anybody. "AIDS is bad, AIDS is bad," she's been known to mutter under her breath like a loopy mantra from Mister Rogers' neighborhood. She just doesn't like those vocal few who would interrupt a speech or throw blood on church steps. After all, she's sure the big THEY out there—that comforting gang of government officials and researchers—are doing their best to find a cure.

And she does give generously and goes to all the major events. And, she puts on her studded Red Ribbon pin at every single one of them—except for the time she got her dates mixed up and wore the purple ribbon

to that Celebrity Rollerblading Tournament. Everyone was a little puzzled, except for Denzel of course, who gave her a big hug. The picture of the two of them did turn up in the following day's METRO section. The helmet and the elbow pads made her look so sporty, and her social calendar went bonkers for a while. And boy did the quality of the benefits improve after that. Cancer. Multiple Sclerosis. And the *crème de la crème*, the Screen Actor's Guild Retirement Fund! She got to meet all of her old favorites. What was it like working with Dana Andrews? Was Thelma Ritter really as nice they said she was? Are you still in touch with Mickey Rooney?

Oh yes, back to that AIDS thing! They even asked her once to sit on the Board of Directors at a prominent AIDS Organization. One catered meeting a month and free tickets to all the fundraisers. She perused her calendar and couldn't believe that, yes, she really was too busy to make such a commitment. She'd

make a mental note: "Write an extra generous check to them this month and ask if members of the Board of Governors have to attend meetings." That would be her way in—she was sure of it. All of the prestige and none of the fuss. There was just so much else to do.

When she stopped working, she thought her life would slow down—but, really, there aren't enough hours during the day to get it all done anymore. "How did I ever work and do all this?" she pondered. And then—just as she thought, she checked her watch, muttered something about a Women in Film luncheon, looked in the mirror to straighten her Chanel suit, and she was out the door. "I'll see you at the Walden Pond thing on Sunday!" I guess I should have told her that this Sunday was Heal the Bay, but I'm sure she'll look fabulous either way.

When he hears the word AIDS, he thinks of frequent flier miles.

Another hand to shake, another game of phone tag. The Conference on Differently Abled Lesbians of Color Facing Early Life Traumas and AIDS-related Dementia was a little on the disappointing side. After all, where were the workshops on Transgendered Visually-challenged Asian Pacific Islanders with KS? But boy does Boston shimmer during the fall season—and he did get to press the flesh of a few key CEOs.

It's not like it used to be: AIDS, with a few grass roots organizations in a few queer-heavy cities. No, no, no—there was money to be made now. "Check Wall Street!" he'd say. "It's alive!" Nutritional supplements. Pharmaceuticals. Hospitals. Condoms. Infections aren't the only

things that are opportunistic. Even in the non-profit AIDS world, you've got thousands of people with expense accounts traveling to this conference or that symposium. "It's a good thing," he'd say. "The bigger the business, the more seriously the issue is taken. If it's taken more seriously, they'll find a cure that much quicker. And if not, well at least it provided jobs for a lot of people."

He's secretly terrified that somebody will find out that he's really HIV negative. His name has been synonymous with AIDS for so long, it would wreck his career. But with all the travelling back and forth between the two coasts, he looks just haggard enough all the time to pass.

He's got each public appearance timed down to the millisecond. Enter, smile, meet and greet, say a few words about bureaucracy, red tape and homophobia, read that old chestnut AIDS poem tucked in his breast pocket (the blue hairs always weep), smile again, meet the press, record a few PSAs, on to the next meeting. Whew, is he exhausted! But it's going to pay off some day. Even if they don't cure AIDS, his resume will shine like a beacon.

He learned early on that it's more important to offend as few people as possible than it is to actually accomplish anything. Of course, he does tend to get snippy with his subordinates. He's a master at slowing down the process by tripping people up on semantics. They're not gay; they're men who have sex with men. They're not "AIDS Patients;" they're people living with HIV disease or people living with AIDS. It's not "alternative therapy;" it's complementary therapy. They're not "bisexuals;" they're multiply-abled, choice-enhanced, sexually-stratified entities. And so on.

## GET FAT, don't die!

### Jeffer Mae's Black Eyed Peas

1 large yellow onion, chopped  
2 or 3 minced shallots  
½ cup chopped celery  
1 pound of cooked ham, cut into half-inch cubes  
chopped parsley  
cracked pepper  
dash cayenne  
½ teaspoon thyme  
½ teaspoon sage (optional)  
2 cans black-eyed peas

Heat the olive oil in a skillet. Add the onion, shallots, celery, ham, and spices. Sauté until onions are translucent. Stir in black-eyed peas and simmer for 25 minutes and salt to taste.

This down-home dish can be made more authentic (and maybe less approachable) by the addition of shredded cabbage or mustard green. You can also swap your favorite cajun seasoning mix for the spices listed.

### Biffy Mae's Deforestation Salad

1-3 tablespoons olive oil  
1 teaspoon balsamic vinegar  
cracked pepper  
1 head romaine lettuce, shredded  
grated asiago or parmesan cheese  
1 can hearts of palm  
½ cup toasted pine nuts

Whisk olive oil and vinegar until mixed. Toss in the lettuce. Sprinkle with pepper and grated cheese to taste. Drain the palm hearts and cut into ¼-inch pieces. Top the bed of lettuce with palm slices and toasted pine nuts. (To toast pine nuts, heat them in an unoiled skillet for about 5 minutes, stirring constantly.)

## DPN Reader Profile

**A.J.** lives in Sacramento, the capital of the golden state of California, where he enjoys the confluence of the delta, the legislature, and the country-western scene. A.J. likes animals and he's happily married (but we'll forward your love letters to him anyway). Other than those interesting tidbits, he prefers to remain the mysterious stranger.

*And what about you? If you'd like to be famous, send us a few snapshots of what you've got. Snailmail or email, digital or hardcopy, use the address on the inside front cover and we'll get back to you. Limits are respected, though debauchery is encouraged. Oh yes, we'll love you even with all of your catheters, especially those nice big fat ones that go directly into your...*



The sound bite heard round the world. A witness for the elocution. Jack of all tirades. Nothing got done, but he used the word "perspicacious" and that counts for something, doesn't it?

The funny thing is...he's lost countless friends to AIDS. In fact, I heard his lover isn't doing very well. You'd think there would be more urgency in his voice—if not his actions. Maybe he's just resigned. Maybe he's numb. Maybe he feels there's nothing left to do except climb that ladder.

**When I hear the word AIDS,  
I think of diarrhea.**

I think of strange diseases with too many syllables and consonants all running together. Coccidioidomycosis. Cryptococcosis. Histoplasmosis. Isosporiasis. I think of sweating and coughing and itching and vomiting. I think of fevers and dementia and wasting. I think of pills and herbs, magic mushrooms and cucumbers. I think of people sick of being sick. I think of Hickmans and Picklines and liquid food in a bag. I think of T-cells named Manny, Moe, and Jack and shingles that don't go on someone's roof. I think of cloudy chest X-rays, sputum samples, and arterial blood gas. Reverse transcriptase and protease and lesions on a face. Dried-out mouths and sores. I think of men, women, children, teenagers.

I think of clinical trials with impossible restrictions. Too many T-cells. Not enough T-cells. Pregnant? No way. AZT for six months. Never been on ddI. Double blind. Probably a placebo. Can't tell what the drug is.

I think of acronyms up the wazoo. PCR. KS. PCP. ACTG.

MGBG. MAC. HTLV-III. IV HPMPC.

I think of water-based lube with nonoxynol-9. Nonoxynol-9—it all sounds like some science fiction series.

I think of 45 pills a day, side effects, and more pills to combat the side effects. I think of lives cut short.

I think of wasted opportunities...and mixed messages. HIV is harmless—it's AZT that's killing us. No, HIV is multiplying in our lymph nodes even as we speak and AZT works, but only for a while.

I think of resurrected clichés. Everyone dies. I could get hit by a bus tomorrow. I've learned to stop and smell the roses. I appreciate life more. I've discovered my inner child and it's nurturing me back to recovery. The same tired recycled themes. I've been Kübler-Rossed to death—and I bypassed the first four stages!

I think of doctors on billboards and best-selling authors and International Conferences held in impossibly expensive countries.

I think of a hierarchy of innocence. The babies and the hemophiliacs and the dental patients; halo, halo, halo. The gay men and the drug addicts—tsk, tsk—lifestyle choices.

When I think of AIDS, I think of T-shirts and slogans. ACT UP. FIGHT BACK. SILENCE=DEATH. ACTION=LIFE. NOBODY KNOWS I'M HIV+. Wouldn't it be great to have one that said, "I GOT AIDS AND ALL I GOT WAS THIS LOUSY T-SHIRT?"

When I think of AIDS, I think of the disappointment on faces when the lab work comes back... "*Not as we had hoped.*" I think of the people sitting at home as their lives close in on them. Being alone. Being afraid. Being afraid of being alone.

But sometimes, when I'm not

concentrating too hard, I also think of unbelievable courage. The ability of a man to proudly swim in a public pool while covered with KS. I think of the optimism on the face of the woman in the "Be Here For The Cure" T-shirt who can barely cross the street.

I think of physicians who give their home phone numbers and beeper numbers to patients, who break the rules and sneak them onto trials, or hand them experimental drugs under the table. I think of the AIDS service worker who won't hesitate to stay 'til 9 that night to make sure the buddy shows up at the client's house. Or the one who can joke about his bad hair day while losing a battle with toxo in the hospital.

But soon enough, I lose those warm and fuzzy feelings and the scary stuff bubbles back up to the surface. Thoughts of needles and hollow cheeks and shit-filled diapers. Like those dreams about falling only knowing that you'll probably hit the ground *before* you wake up.

Before AIDS, I always thought a suppository was a banking term. Now I'm all too familiar with enough medical terms that I could open up my own practice...and my own pharmacy to boot.

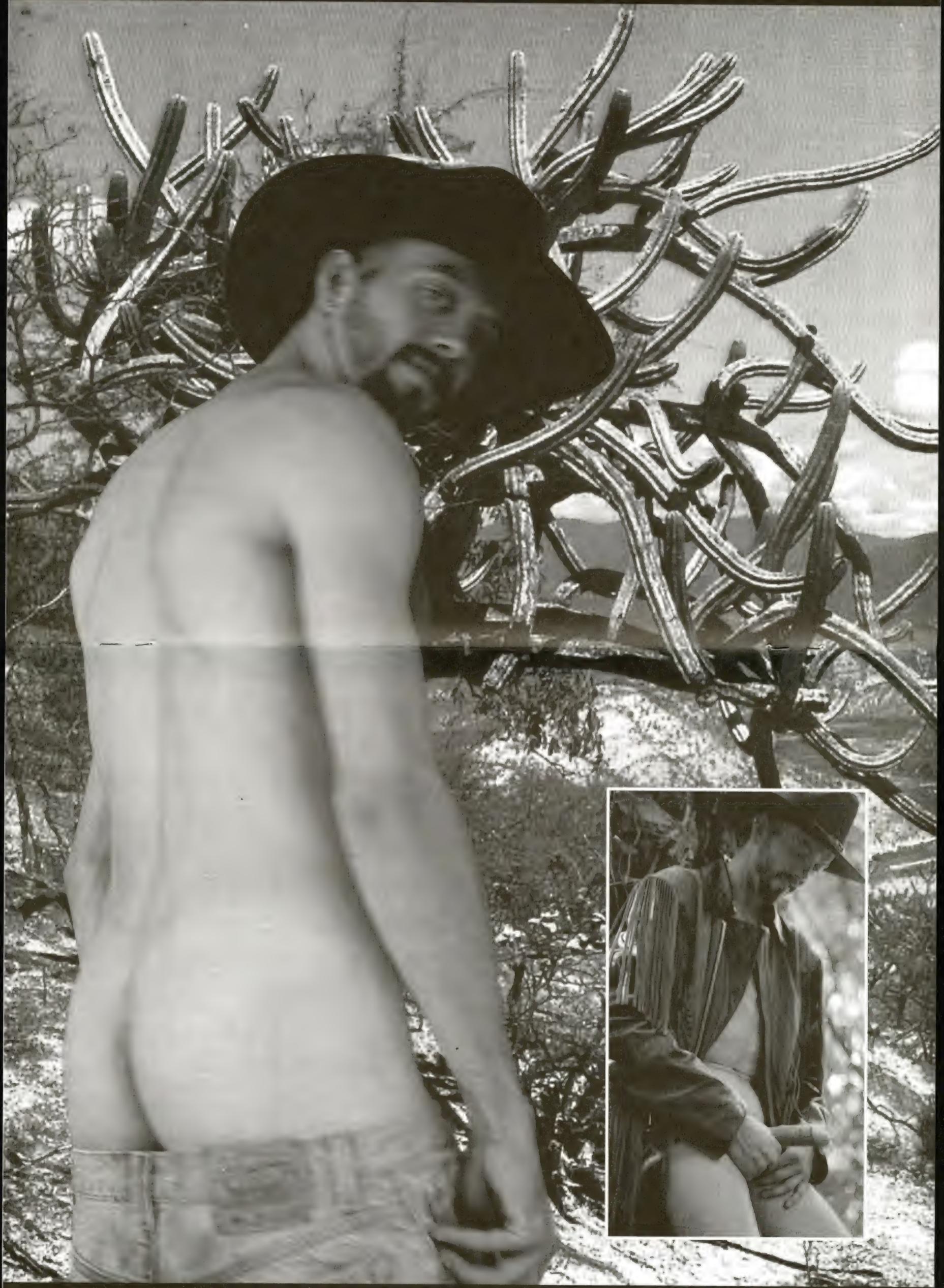
When I hear the word AIDS, I think of ticking clocks. Of another day gone by. Of another day *without* a cure. And another day *without* hope. And then another day *with* hope. And then another day goes by.

**When she hears the word AIDS,  
she thinks of shoulder pads.**

**When he hears the word AIDS,  
he thinks of frequent flier miles.**

**When I hear the word AIDS,  
I think of diarrhea.**

CENTERFOLD BOY



A.J.

## *Just Call Me Grace*

Oh my goodness, graceless me!

More than a grunt,  
less than an "I'm there."  
It appears my warning  
was quite less than fair.

A shot in the mouth,  
the rest in the air,  
dancing streams leaping  
across face and hair.

Thru Levalor blinds  
by pale moon of night,  
he's showered in nectar,  
bathed in milky light.

A major faux pas,  
in this room dimly lit.  
I grope for my clothes  
and spout "Go ahead, spit."

Oh my goodness, graceless me!

How could I have been  
so thoughtlessly reckless?  
(Gasp!) What a gift –  
an unwanted pearl necklace.

Don't know his name.  
Won't remember his face.  
Another trick unworthy  
of even diary space.

After uttered apologies  
and hurriedly dressed  
he sees me out politely,  
nausea barely suppressed.

Sooner or later  
it will happen to you.  
So be prepared sister,  
know what to do!

—Michael Scarce

## No Place Like Home

At a family reunion  
my mother serves alphabet soup  
The letters H I V swim before my eyes  
I blink: my imagination  
or a cruel cosmic joke?  
Speaking of cruel jokes  
my cousin has one:  
*One stockbroker says to the other*

*I got IBM at 26 and a half*  
*The other stockbroker says,*  
*"That's nothing, I got HIV at 24 and a half."*  
Ha Ha  
Ha Ha Ha  
Buddy did not die  
laughing

—Lesléa Newman

## Kiss or KS

"No girl did that," the kid in my class said.  
True enough, but I was marked  
in other ways. I didn't need the  
International, the RamRod, Man's  
Country. Lips, honey, lips are the way  
all the way down when you  
can't see in the ruck, though he has just  
lit his lighter so you can see  
what you can't see though you know it's there  
because your knees are cold and he's  
one of the few who said a word:  
"People are so impersonal here," he says,  
unzipping, placing his hand on your head  
and when he's done he's off.

"I saw you as soon as you walked in,"  
he dared me, as I did too, the tips of my fingers  
entering the threads ripped at the knee,  
thicker than the spare black hairs there.  
Mouth in mouth, one bar stool leaning,  
the barkeep said, "Boys, I'll let you know

Pour them  
into a jar and shake it  
to a Tito Puente tape  
Buddy always liked a Latin beat

String them  
into necklace & earring sets  
and wear them to a drag ball  
Buddy did love to accessorize

Feed them  
to the rats in the hall  
and watch them puke all night  
Remember Buddy's sick sense of  
humor?

Line them  
up on a table take  
a hammer smash them  
one by one by one

—Lesléa Newman

I dance in the eyes of my Lord  
and only I, though I dance for so many more,  
and as my feet touch the coals  
and my skin the flame,  
only the guilt is as great as the shame  
that wracks my unhallowed grave.

And the pit was black  
and the room was red,  
whose pious latch eludes the grasp,  
for lo, I become an example to the godfearing,  
an exhibit in their cathedral of the damned

when I have to separate you," so we went  
from Sneakers to Ty's to Boots and Saddles,  
all the same stories, another beer, another kiss  
another kiss, another kiss, my neck in love,  
blushing.

"What do you want to do," he asked  
and weighing the D train versus the alley,  
the choices stiffening and my head spinning round  
his tongue, his tongue,  
take that tongue back home  
and my neck, oh my neck please I can't take it  
with my hand on his head  
working real hard  
and at work the next day there are more tongues  
wagging, moving, caressing the question:  
did he have a kiss or KS.

—Steven H. Koenig

And the room was molten in its redness,  
but held its shape  
(as is the way with divine things)  
by the light of a thousand whispers whispering in turn,  
best you not touch the walls, lest you adhere  
screaming to the screaming metal and burn!

And best I found not to breach my gate,  
for Azrael stood on the other side of my cell,  
and demanded of me,  
who am I,  
to be wandering about so freely,  
within the confines of hell?

—Beowulf J. Thorne

# OI Merit Badges

**T**HERE ARE SOME PEOPLE WHO claim that they can easily recognize "the look"—those subtle signs of wasting that reveal the ravages of HIV to the sharp-eyed observer—even in PWAs who've hardly progressed at all. They claim that a certain hollowness of the cheeks is definitive, even when the person involved is, overall, quite healthy.

I don't buy it. An early stage HIVer just doesn't look any different than an uninfected person. Consider the "Advera guy," the studly hunk who models in the ads for the otherwise obnoxious food supplement being marketed to PWAs. Maybe it's the magic of modern photography, but careful examination of the ads fails to reveal even the slightest hint of "the look" to my discerning eye. Of course, a studmuffin as healthy as the "Advera guy" doesn't need their nauseating concoction, but that's beside the point.

In the old days it was easy to spot

a "long-term survivor" because we were the ones who looked like death warmed over. Of course, you only had to last more than a year in those days to be counted as a "long-term" survivor. Nowadays there are PWAs who've weathered more bouts of PCP than a dog has fleas, and they don't necessarily look any worse off than the average suburbanite (who have a subtle "look" of their own, as distinctive in its own way as the HIV look).

All this makes it harder to judge at a glance just how "progressed" a given HIVer is. The shortcut to this is to find out their T-cell count—in the past I've suggested that PWA socials have name tags that give the wearer's most recent T-cell score—but this is unreliable. Some PWAs have serious

trouble at 500 T-cells, others zero them out without ever encountering an OI (though I suspect this is rare); some retain hundreds of T-cells for years, while others lose them all within a few months of infection.

The exact degree of progression can be a matter of great importance while cruising. Many HIV-negatives won't have anything to do, sexually or romantically, with an HIVer. And some HIVers won't date negatives at all, to avoid tiresome debates over safety and, in the case

of infection, blame. Some HIVers take pride in our long history of OIs, and scorn to associate with long-term survivors who got their diagnosis on the basis of a single small KS lesion; others want to avoid highly-progressed "dead



meat specials" who take up space in the Rolodex only to die on you in a couple of months. So tacky, so inconvenient!

We can take much of the guesswork out of progression estimation by the issuing of Opportunistic Infection Merit Badges. Similar to the service badges worn by military personnel, which to the educated eye reveal where and when the soldier served, or the merit badges awarded to Boy Scouts, the OIMBs will document their wearer's status at a glance.

A number of potential badges are provided for the use of you or your friends. Cut out the attached badge designs, color them in, and mount them on pins or buttons. The well-heeled may choose to mint fancy, bejeweled versions of the standard pins, just as some prefer diamond-studded variations of the ubiquitous red ribbon.

We encourage the use of multiple badges to portray multiple bouts of the same illness. For example, if you've had several rounds with PCP, it would be appropriate to wear a copy of that badge—a stylized "flat tire" icon—for each encounter. Of course, badges should be displayed in proper sequence. If you had a spell of PCP, then the onset of KS, and then another bout of PCP, this should be documented with a PCP badge, then one portraying the KS leopard, and finally another PCP marker.

If an OI is particularly unusual or complicated, its badge may be supplemented with extra ribbons or stars.

Not all badges need refer to OIs. Some will document the use of certain anti-virals, and others can testify to visits in this or that hospital or clinic. (Presumably there will be little

call for badges denoting residency in hospices, since—as with roach motels—many check into them but few check out.) If a novel drug was taken under experimental circumstances, this warrants the addition of a guinea pig ribbon to the badge.

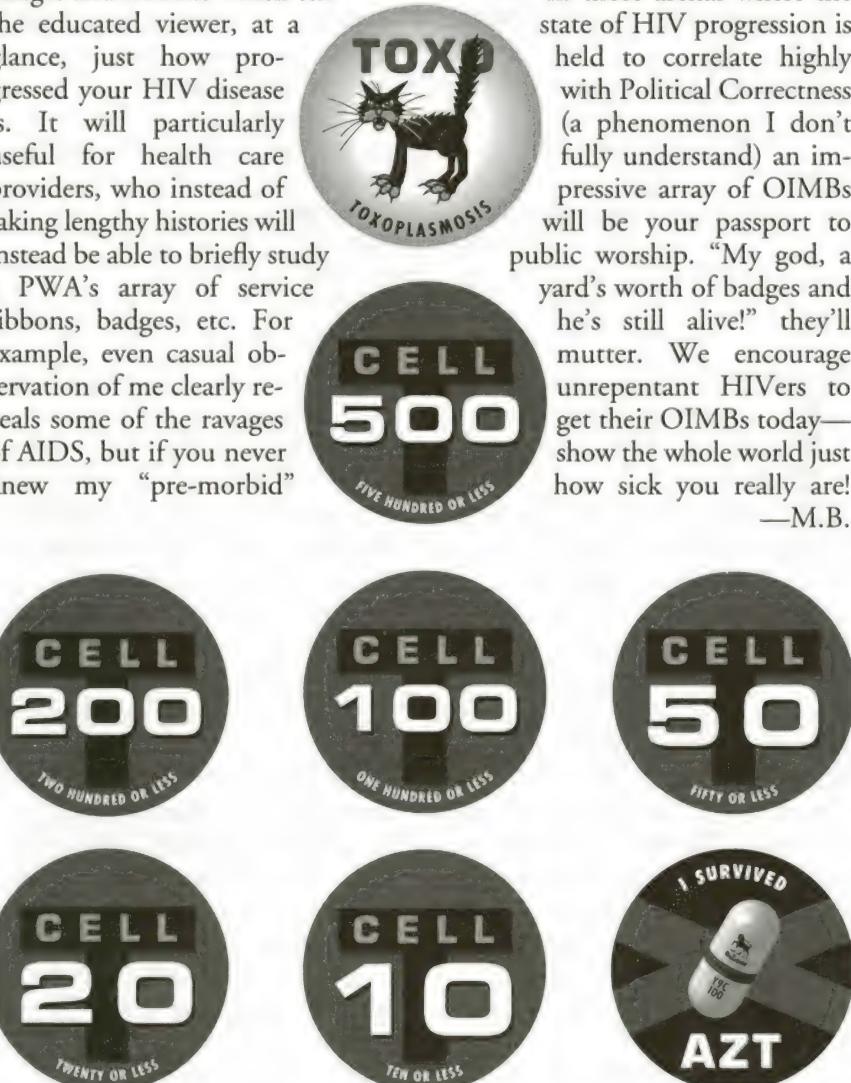
Finally, the whole patch of badges should be topped by an adjustable T-cell marker, which gives the latest count. Truly cutting edge PWAs can list their most recent branch DNA viral load test results.

The outcome will be an array of badges and ribbons which tell

the educated viewer, at a glance, just how progressed your HIV disease is. It will particularly useful for health care providers, who instead of taking lengthy histories will instead be able to briefly study a PWA's array of service ribbons, badges, etc. For example, even casual observation of me clearly reveals some of the ravages of AIDS, but if you never knew my "pre-morbid"

In those arenas where the state of HIV progression is held to correlate highly with Political Correctness (a phenomenon I don't fully understand) an impressive array of OIMBs will be your passport to public worship. "My god, a yard's worth of badges and he's still alive!" they'll mutter. We encourage unrepentant HIVers to get their OIMBs today—show the whole world just how sick you really are!

—M.B.



# My Clementina

## by Kevin Bentley

"Naughty love, to what dost thou not compel our mortal hearts? ...If it rage, it is no more Love, but burning Lust, a Disease, Phrensy, Madness, Hell. 'Tis death, 'tis an immeasurable calamity, 'tis a raging madness... A vehement perturbation of the mind, a monster of nature, wit, and art... manfully rash, womanishly timid, furiously headlong, bitter sweet, a caressing blow...."

"In letting of blood, three main circumstances are to be considered, *who, how much, when?*"

Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*

HERE'S ALWAYS BEEN HOT blood between us. It started in early 1978, when I was twenty-one and newly arrived in San Francisco. Going to the city clinic for the first time was like a straight boy's pilgrimage to a prostitute. It was a rite of gay manhood, you earned your spurs. You took the six-inch cotton swab up your dick or your butt and the two fat hypodermics or the pills like a man; you drank Calistoga for five days and caught up on your reading—and you hit the ground running again by the next weekend at the 'N Touch or the Stud. It had a seedy location, the doom smell of Lysol and rubbing alcohol, and the name of a Gold Rush whore: *Clementina*.

"What happened to *you* last

week?" someone would ask when you reappeared.

"Clementina."

My face would take on a grim and rueful expression as I walked to the VD clinic at Clementina and Fourth in the cool morning air. Leaving behind the respectable financial district throngs, I'd pass empty, chain-link fenced lots, the ancient, lost-looking red brick hulk of St. Patrick's, the gaping hole that would be Moscone Center. Inside the nondescript stucco building and up a flight of stairs, the waiting room teemed with love's nervous martyrs, pacing or seated on rows of multicolored plastic chairs.

It had the atmosphere of a rowdy detention hall, the mood electric, shameful, defiant, changeable. One angry couple screaming their re-

criminations could make it sordid; one belligerent black queen sweeping out of a treatment room with a campy, "And I say, 'Girlfriend, you stick that thing in *me* and I slap you 'cross this room!'" could dissolve the crowd in revolutionary laughter.

Later, familiarity bred a kind of nostalgia. The view I stared at from the windows alongside the blood draw table as I turned away from the digging needle—a dry little housing project vegetable garden, traffic, and the distant houses of Potrero Hill—became for me the landscape of hope and regret: *love, at any price*.

In the first moneyless weeks before I found a job, I'd sold plasma half a dozen times at a Tenderloin plasma center. Surrounded by red-eyed drunks and TV hookers, I lay on a table for two hours composing

baleful poems (*At this drive-in/ patrons sell entrance to lank veins/ watching, from rows of parked tables/ a panicked epic of sting and tedium/ on the ceiling...*) while a pint of red-black blood was siphoned into a plastic pouch, taken away and separated from its straw-colored plasma, and then, chilled and dense, slowly returned to my vein at the end of an icy needle.

I gladly stopped selling plasma when I got a job at Bonanza, a forty-year-old downtown bookstore. There I was taken in hand by Jeff Murray, an older (thirty-one!) gay man who quickly became my big brother, mentor, and best friend. He would stand behind the register box at Bonanza, which was raised up five inches from the checkerboard linoleum like a pulpit, and silently preach from *The Book of Dick*, rating men as they browsed the remainder tables beneath the faded and dusty day-glo orange *Bargain!* pennants hanging stiffly the length of the store, and buzzing me up to the front for anyone special.

I'd pick up the staticy black intercom phone in the shipping room to hear Jeff's sotto voce "Psychology—halfway down the aisle. I think I'm in love."

Jeff and I had sex a couple of times, then he tossed me into the deep end and returned to the hunt. Each morning as we emptied the creaking book cart and dissed the latest bestsellers, we'd compare notes on the previous evening, sounding like a couple of jaded tarts.

"You trick?"

"Jesus—did I trick? I don't know how I'm standing here! It had to be the biggest cock I've ever seen!" Talking to Jeff about his conquests was like collecting folklore—you

just listened and appreciated, you didn't doubt. They always had dicks of Paul Bunyan dimensions or perfect asses, unless they didn't, and then he could be scathing: "It was like my little finger, and naturally he wanted to fuck me! Jesus! It was like lying under a goddam sewing machine!"

I learned about the clap. Jeff would come slapping through the swinging shipping room door lighting a cigarette, and seconds later come stomping out of the toilet: "Well, I knew it! I'm dripping again!" When it came to gonorrhea, Jeff was as full of superstition as an old peasant woman. For a while he swore that fucking short, cute, bubble-butted blonds in painter pants guaranteed you a dose. He was certain a particularly virulent bout of anal gonorrhea he got was directly traceable to a pair of god-like Greek twins he met at the Liberty Baths—Castor and Pox, he called them with a grimace. Some years later, improbable HIV-negative test result in hand, he attempted to placate other gods by marrying a blind woman and moving to Tahiti.

One of Jeff's theories was that if you tricked with someone and you really hit it off and you started seeing each other, the first serious talk you were likely to have would be when one of you gave the other the clap. To balance out my new life as a Polk Street slut, I'd started going to a community college poetry workshop one night a week at a high school in the Marina, which was peopled chiefly with bored yuppie couples, aging beats, and pert Emily Dickinson wannabes.

My poems about killing and eating my father (a scenario culled from a newspaper clipping), adolescent

cent sex with my older brother ("Baby, you were the first..."), and a love poem ending with the line, "his entrails fluttered like crazed colonists at a maypole..." may have left my listeners glassy-eyed and speechless, but they got me a ride home with the handsome instructor. Jonah was a tall, clever, bright-eyed and black-goated poet (with a day job in accounting), and we'd been staring holes in each other since the first class. There was something in the haste with which he declared his devotion to me after our first encounter that made me a little wary, but the sex was passionate. A couple of days after our love's consummation I was peeing through broken glass and oozing a nasty paste, and Jeff was almost teary-eyed with concern and filial pride. "You really like this guy, don't you?" he said, giving my shoulder a little punch. "See what I told you?"

That was my first time at the clinic, and I went down nobly, suffering in the throes of a new romance. I squeezed my glans over a lab slide and bared my ass for two thigh-numbing shots of penicillin that left me wobbly-legged and dizzy. Jonah was calling to tell me when I got home; he'd been to his doctor that morning. "The city clinic?" he said in horror. "Oh, you poor baby!" We couldn't wait out the full week and were at each other a few days later, made insatiable by the chance we were taking.

Jonah was also the first man I met who found it perfectly reasonable to profess obsessive, tormented love for me, while maintaining a bloodless, tidy life-partner arrangement back at home, inviolable as a sarcophagus. I'd interrupt his feverish post-coital endearments with the

obvious, "What about your lover?"

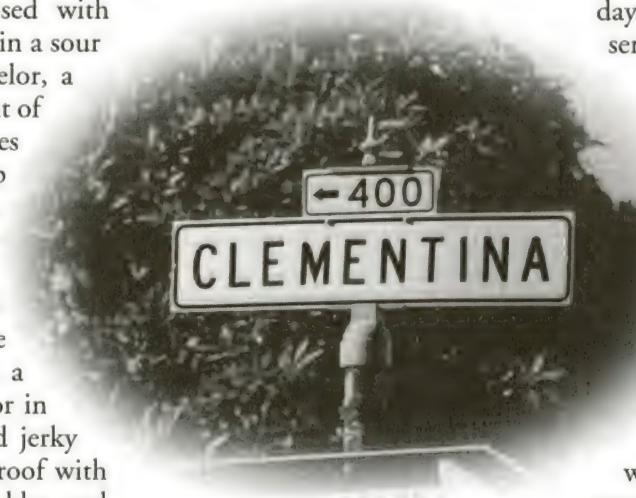
"Oh, Martin doesn't mind. He thinks you're very attractive. Actually, he wants to have a three-way."

I finally lost my ardor for Jonah after he gave me the clap a second time and then, following a particularly poignant bout of lovemaking, stared longingly into my eyes and asked if I'd mind urinating in his mouth.

After Jonah, my dance card at Clementina began to fill up. Sometimes the tickle and drip would only be urethritis, or "strain;" sometimes I'd be summoned, having been reported as a contact by some ungentlemanly sex partner. When you were diagnosed with gonorrhea, you had to sit in a sour little room with a counselor, a calendar spread out in front of you, and try to match names and phone numbers up with the previous ten days. This was seldom a simple task.

In May of 1979, I came stumbling home drunk one evening and tricked with a previously unmet neighbor in the building's narrow and jerky elevator. We rode to the roof with our pants around our ankles and took turns fucking each other in the gravel, fired up by the smoky tumult and sirens of the White Night riots at Civic Center several blocks away.

There was a line of men reading newspapers and drinking coffee waiting for the clinic to open when I made my way there the following week, suffering both "fore" and "aft," as clinic jargon put it. Inside, it was like the booking room after a big bust. "Did you riot?" someone



when

we finally got together, was reciprocal and fully *intent* in a way I'd begun to despair of ever finding with the businesslike and detached sex-as-aerobics men I'd been meeting. I knew enough to try and hide how bowled over I was, but I tipped my hand when I called him back too soon after one of our evenings, and he told me bluntly, "If you're expecting anything *romantic*, that's out of the question." He dumped

me flat a little later, and then I got a call from the clinic telling me someone recently diagnosed with syphilis had listed me as a contact. This meant that I, in turn, had to call up five people and advise *them* to get blood tests, not knowing which of these was the one who already knew. This included Allan, who was icy when I called—as well as my friend Gina, who'd discovered my bisexuality, and her ex-lover Arthur. "I didn't know you still did it with Arthur!" I said.

"I probably won't after this," she said.

You couldn't escape the clinic without a visit to the blood draw table. At some point in those early days I signed the first of an endless series of release forms allowing

several extra tubes of blood to be taken and tested for exposure to Hepatitis B. That was the beginning of a new phase—the Hep Study—which at first coincided with my necessary check-ups and treatments for the clap, and then, as years passed

and my STDs dwindled, became the sole purpose of my walks to Clementina. Now I was summoned every few months for blood-taking and injections of experimental Hepatitis B vaccine (or, as it turned out, a placebo vaccine, and a year later, the real thing), and going to the clinic became a kind of public service. The people who drew my blood and took down my responses to the sex-contact and drug use questionnaires were friendly, respectful, and grateful. I'd stroll back to work wounded and virtuous, a cotton ball taped to the crook of my arm, with the rare, warm feeling of

having done a clear, uncomplicated good thing: If the vaccine worked, I might never get Hepatitis B and a lot of other people could avoid it. Thus was born my secret superstition: By taking part in the study, by ritually letting my blood at appointed intervals, I staved off the Bad Thing.

On my quarterly visits to the clinic, I saw the shifting outline of my life limned and quantified in the batteries of questions I answered: "Was the number of partners with whom you had sex to orgasm since your last visit greater than ten? Twenty? Thirty? Number of times you placed your penis in a partner's rectum? Number of times a partner ejaculated in your mouth? On average, of the three days a week on which you drank alcohol, how many drinks did you have?" Over time my answers went from belligerently high numbers to wistfully low.

Then the Hep Study was over and several years passed without my going to the clinic. The AIDS mushroom cloud bloomed in a sort of nightmare slow-motion. Nobody I knew got VD anymore. When the HIV test debuted, I didn't rush out for it; I assumed I had been infected.

I heard about the AIDS death of an ex-boyfriend of mine in October of 1985, the night before I was to move in with my new lover. When that lover sickened a year later, we both got tested. We were positive of course, and Jack was diagnosed with PCP. I wasn't much bothered by my results; all of my attention was on

|  |                                 |   |                  |                                  |                |
|--|---------------------------------|---|------------------|----------------------------------|----------------|
| 01/EYK 96  |                                 | S.F. Dept. of Public Health-City Clinic | Corresp. In-File | Z                                | Epid. referral |
| Name   | (last)                          | (first)                                 | DOB - M/D/Y      | GC-U R P E O                     |                |
| Bentley, Kevin   |                                 |   | 1/19/56          | Last syph. Dx- I II III LL C E L | Date           |
|  |                                 |   | 5/10/79          | Rx                               |                |
|  |                                 | X Kevin Bentley                         | B X F            | DxSTS date                       | result         |
|  |                                 |   |                  | Last STS date                    | result         |
|  |                                 |   |                  | Last FTA date                    | result         |
| 7080 Broad #200 SF 09<br>447776-1828 (61562-7378<br>601 Leavenworth #44SF 09<br>774F7328 STUDY P<br><b>COMPLETED</b> |                                 |   |                  |                                  |                |
| DATE<br>M D Y  | TREATMENT<br>Drug Sensitivity?  |   |                  |                                  |                |
| 6/14/79  | 4.8 m.u. APP 1 gr Probenecid    | GC                                      | Result           | STS                              | FTA            |
| 6/20/79  | 4.8 m.u. A.P.P. 1 gr Probenecid | Coin                                    | Sm DF            | Result                           | Other          |
|  |                                 |   |                  |                                  | Result         |
|  |                                 |   |                  |                                  | Dig.           |

ACCESS<sup>TM</sup> MANUFACTURED UNDER ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING UNITED STATES PATENTS

Jack and his staying well.

Jack had had AIDS for over a year when someone from the clinic got in touch with me again, like an old lover calling after years to see how your life's ended up. The AIDS Cohort Study, it was now called, the strange statistical word *cohort* always suggesting *accomplice*, or more subliminally, *cavort*. Now I heard for the first time of that eerie vault of frozen blood at the CDC in Atlanta—row upon row of vials, like old bottles of amyl lodged in the

back of the freezer, little homunculi lined up like toy soldiers on a shelf or ancestors in a family crypt, only the one date on each: December 11, 1978; June 4, 1979; May 12, 1980; June 12, 1982.

"I do. When?"  
"June 12, 1982."  
June, 1982: I'd been pining over a bad-news boyfriend I'd broken up with the previous fall, running around with my friends Gary and Michael and Gina. Amid my frequent complaints about not finding a lover, I'd been having lots of sex. In the months leading up to that June I had what is now termed "unsafe sex" with a blond dentist on vacation from his teaching post in Saudi Arabia who admired my straight teeth; a former high school

coach from Texas turned massage therapist I met sunbathing on the roof of Bonanza one lunch break; a darkly handsome French teacher from Boston University in town to visit an old friend dying from "that weird new gay cancer;" a hunky, closeted, computer programmer with a stack of Koszinski novels beside his bed; a skinny, wild-eyed hairstylist who embarrassed me by yelling, "Give me all those little Kevins!" as I fucked him; Michael, Gary, and Gina; and, on an unexpected layover, Jeff, who was living with a lover in Monterey, but had come to the city on business.

I cried during the blood draw the first time I went back after Jack died, suddenly too aware of having a body when he did not, certain grief had peeled my gripping fingers off the cliff edge of nonprogression. "I'm sorry," Dr. Buchbinder said. "Am I hurting you?"

Having accompanied Jack on so many lab visits, getting stuck was now freighted for me with the seriousness of a potentially terminal illness. They took more blood when I went in now, too, which took more time and a bigger needle, Fedexing it off to half a dozen studies around the country. I climbed up on the paper-covered table and lay with my eyes shut.

There were still the sex questions, which didn't take long to answer, and the cigarette, alcohol, and pot queries, but things had taken a morbid turn, and sexual braggadocio gave way to the dementia parlor games of the neuro-psych battery. I'd listen to a tedious, suspiciously detail-crammed story problem (*The cruise ship Regina left port on Tuesday February 22nd at 3 AM. On the third day out, Anna Thompson, the cleaning lady, a redhead with bad dentures, had her purse stolen. She had six children, two of whom were undergoing expensive dermabrasion procedures...*) and then proudly recite the torpid details back. It was like having your gossip quotient measured.

A few days after a clinic visit, I'd

get the call: Your T-helper cells are 1160—or 1210—or 1050 (420-1250 was supposedly the normal range; below that you had to think about AZT or some anti-viral) and I'd go home to my dying lover who had ten we didn't talk about, ashamed of my selfish elation at my good marks.

I cried during the blood draw the first time I went back after Jack died, suddenly too aware of having a body when he did not, certain grief had peeled my gripping fingers off the cliff edge of nonprogression. "I'm sorry," Dr. Buchbinder said. "Am I hurting you?"

Then I fell in love with Richard, who had to start AZT a few months after we met. I couldn't very well expect him to say *hooray for you* when my numbers came back high every time and his steadily dropped.

He died too. And plenty of others, *blah blah blah*. You fill in the rest. These days the Study, long ago relocated to plusher health department offices on Van Ness (the old VD clinic at Clementina's an art gallery now), throws informational socials where researchers report on the shreds of data they're culling from the participants' blood. Staring at images on a screen in a darkened room, I feel insubstantial as a ghost drifting through the data: the DNA bow ties, the pie charts, the ugly line graph whose bony arm rises ineluctably upward across the accumulating years of infection and the numbers dead or diagnosed. We

long-term nonprogressives crowd the center of our diminishing slice of the pie chart, scrambling as the "Twilight Zone" theme music grinds to a halt and a few more chairs are gone.

Talk about your biological clock

ticking—I've been infected for thirteen years and baby, mine's ticking so loud sometimes I can't hear myself think. But I'm still healthy, at least till the next blood results, so I'm lucky, right? And when I hear a newscaster refer to an HIV positive test result as a *death sentence* for the hundredth time, when the TV movie actress screams as she learns her secretly bisexual husband has infected her with the virus and *certain death*, I should laugh and turn away, right? Like I turn away each time the needle slips in, looking for that housing project garden and a vista promising the encircling arms of a lover, at the cost of a week's discomfort.

*On a scale of one to ten, one being not very much, and ten being a lot, which of the following do you feel is responsible for your continued good health?*

- Being a basically happy person (One)
- Spirituality (Zero)
- Eating well and exercising regularly (Five)
- Meditation and alternative therapies (Zero)
- Having a living boyfriend (Ten).

"Can you go a little longer? We're nearly there. Just a couple more minutes now—it's coming kind of slow today. I'm sorry, we may have to poke you again..."

There's a river of blood that flows through the years, eddying around the boyfriends, lovers, and friends, tapped each time I lie back on that table and the needle enters my vein and I'm adrift again, neither dead or alive, lost in my heart's own current. And each time I give over my body and the needle pricks and slides in, I'm fixed like a rabbit in the headlights, staring down the juggernaut with my irrational offering: take my blood, I'm not afraid, don't let me get sick.

# Tea Cell Dances

by Howard Shapiro

**I**'VE BEEN DATING UP A STORM lately! Well, to be honest, it's more like a drizzle. After four Positive Connection dates that were less than positive, I decided to hit the HIV Social Scene. Oy Vey!

I'm not one to complain, but I was quite shocked by what was going on in the restrooms at the Sound Factory, May 16, 1993 at 7:14 P.M.! A group of guys were snorting "Bactrim" to get high. Tsk! Tsk! I could hardly hear anyone coughing over the Donna Summer "MacArthur Park" medley. The music was so loud and the lights were so low I felt like an HIV+ Helen Keller.

JUST KIDDING! The place was filled with very attractive men. It felt like 1979 all over again. It was time to mingle!

HOWARD: Hi! I'm a kvetch! How are you? Having fun? Do you have life insurance?

VICTIM: (no response... dirty look.)

Boy, I was losing this guy fast! He kept on gazing at his watch, like he was gonna be late for Ivana Trump's dinner party! This guy had an attitude. I don't know why—you could land a helicopter on his bald spot!

VICTIM: Listen Kvetch! Think I'll step outside for some fresh air.

Fresh air? In New York City! It was pouring outside—winds going at 100 miles per hour!

I continued to mingle.

HOWARD: Hello! I'm a kvetch! I'm on page 9 of this month's Body Positive! Your name?

VICTIM: Andrew (yawn)

He answered me. And what a conversationalist!

Strike 2! I ran downstairs to the restroom and checked myself out. Not bad for an aging 37 year old former Beauty Queen! Light blue eyes! Shiny brown hair. A tan George Hamilton would die for. 32 inch waist. Big feet! What do these guys want? That's when I decided to turn straight and attend an (HIV+) heterosexual social. Women have always found me adorable. Just ask my mother, grandmother, sister, and aunt!

Jo-Anne (former girlfriend): Howard was a natural in bed. Sometimes he fell asleep on me...but he was an excellent lover! We lost our virginity April 24, 1975 on Barbara Streisand's 33rd birthday. He could turn a lesbian straight!

Streisand: My first name is spelled with two As! BARBRA!!

After I had mingled for another hour I realised I had cleared out the Sound Factory! Boy, was I bombing! (It was worse than Waco.) It was time for me to go home. I would never leave my apartment again!

Liz Smith: What a lie! On May 21st, 1993 at 8:09 P.M. I spotted Howard entering the Tea Dance on 50 East 7th Street. At precisely 9:43 P.M. he left the building with a smile on his face.

Howard: OK! The secret's out! I tried another Body Positive dance. Did I get any phone numbers? None of your business. If I decide to go on the Summer River Cruise and feel uncomfortable, I can always jump overboard and swim back to shore!

**GET FAT, don't die!**

**Humpy-Mae's Lentil Tomato Dal**

This one's easy, cheap, and way yummy. (We're talking about the soup, not Humpy-Mae.) Not the highest fat recipe we've printed—but feel free to fix that with heavily buttered toast on the side.

14 oz. can whole or ground tomatoes  
1 large onion, chopped  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
1 tbsp. oil or ghee (clarified butter)  
1 cup red or brown lentils  
2 cups water  
½ tsp. salt  
1 tsp. cumin  
1 tsp. coriander  
2 tsp. parsley  
1 tsp. garam masala\*  
½ tsp. turmeric  
½ tsp. chili powder

Sauté onion and garlic in oil in a pot that will hold 1½ to 2 quarts. Once onion is translucent, add spices. Wash lentils and drain. Add lentils, water, and tomatoes. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and cover with lid. Red lentils cook in about 30 minutes; brown lentils cook in 45 minutes. Brown lentils are cheaper (surprise, surprise!) so suffer for 15 extra minutes and borrow your neighbor's pressure cooker next time. Serves 4.

\*Garam masala is a powdered Indian spice mixture containing cinnamon, bay leaf, cumin, coriander, cardamom, black pepper, cloves, and mace. If you can't locate any, put together whatever you have to make a teaspoon.

Dear Diary,

Hot fuck last night. No, not as hot as the one I wrote about around two months ago, but pretty fucking hot. I was walking home, minding my own business (yeah, right) when I saw him. Kinda tall, kinda skinny, and although I suck at describing faces I can say his was cleanshaven and sort of intense looking. Not exceptionally handsome in the conventional sense, but fine for me. Just the right amount of rough edges. Dark brown hair, smooth chest. Average length weenie (but fairly thick).

He was from out of town—said he was gonna catch a plane in the morning. It figures... all the hot ones either live far away, or have lovers, or something. He took me to a friend's place he was staying at a few blocks away.

He let me know right away who was going to fuck who—at least, that's how I interpreted his grabbing my ass as soon as we embraced. (I grabbed for his weenie to let him know I wasn't particularly averse to the idea.) We were very much on the same wavelength sexually—we didn't need any words.

I blew him, he blew me, I blew him some more, and he fucked me. I figured he must've been positive when he went to fuck me without a rubber. No negative guy would have ever have been so calm about taking a risk like that. He pulled out before he came.

I have to admit I felt a little weird afterwards. I have no problem with having unprotected buttsex with guys who are also positive, but it felt wrong that we didn't talk about it first. Like I said, I can't imagine he was negative, but I would've felt better if we'd gotten it all out in the open. This crossed my mind when we were fucking but it didn't seem like a big deal at the time. It bothers me a lot more now. I won't be able to replay the experience in my head while jacking off without thinking about having possibly infected him. Maybe I'll get over it. We'll see.

I should stop thinking about it so much. It's over. Just learn what I can from the whole thing and move on. Maybe I oughta talk about my status first. It sucks, though—I mean, part of the attraction was keeping it all nonverbal.

I didn't get his phone number or address. Every other time I've had a great fuck with someone from out of town and exchanged numbers we never got in touch again, so why bother. He didn't ask for my number so I guess he felt the same way. Some other stuff he said gave me the idea he probably has a lover back in Boston.

From the time I had to talk with him, he seemed pretty cool, but I actually didn't want to get to know him too well. He doesn't live here, and it only would've been frustrating if I'd really gotten to like him.

In case you think I'm a complete slut, I did get (and remember!) his name. It's Russell.

Dear Diary,

If this handwriting is a little hard to read, it's because I'm writing this on a flight home from San Francisco. I was out for a trade show, but I only had one day at the end to myself. I stayed at Brian's apartment but I didn't get to see much of him (he was away most of the time while I was there).

San Francisco is not Boston. Sigh. The entire city is a cruisy area; I got more attention from guys in three days than I normally get in a month. Maybe it's the syndrome of always scoring better when you're on vacation, but even so, sex seems to be in the air itself.

I only have one trick to report, but it was a good one. I had pretty much resigned myself to sexual window shopping on this trip, partly coz I was pretty busy the whole time and partly coz I just didn't want to get my hopes up. I didn't feel like expending the energy necessary to go to a bar or anything, and although I got a lot of looks on the street, they don't necessarily translate into scoring. But the last night I was there, one guy I saw on the street wouldn't break eye contact at all—so I dragged him back to Brian's and poked him. Very satisfying sex—didn't leave me wishing anything had been different. I could tell he was HIV-negative without asking, so I didn't bother with a rubber. Guys who know they're infected have it written all over their faces.

He was in a little bit of a rush to go after we fucked. Maybe he didn't want to know anything else about me, nothing to taint the fantasy image. Maybe he had a lover. I was content with things as they stood, and I didn't ask.

The trade show was kinda boring.

# Dire Diaries

# Jock-A-Holics Detox



**Jock-A-Holics** ©1993 All Worlds Video, opened four eyes out of five.

**E**CCLESIASTES\* TELLS US that there is nothing new under the sun, which makes us all creatures of ritual, habitually appeasing our various fetishes without much thought to their origin. But as tired as that hairdo from 1983 is, or as passé as the leather jacket encrusted with slogans of liberation was several years later, they all seemed profound, really new when we first adopted them. The truth is, life is full of these first times; seminal events that forever contour our psyches. So let us look back a little bit to some of our firsts: our first kiss, our first time in the locker room, our first bra, our first jockstrap...

Our film Jock-a-Holics opens in an unidentified underwear store somewhere in the gay ghetto. It's well appointed, with a chic rotating mannequin torso sporting an epic sized athletic supporter. Business must be slow, since the manager, a young preppy with pouting bee-stung lips is wanking off over an open skin magazine. He just gets his equipment put away when the last

customer of the day walks in, a lad in need. Turns out that the lad used to be a ninety-eight-pound weakling, but thanks to Charles Atlas, he's ready to try out for the team.

Hot dang! There's only one problem: the Rookie's got to get a jockstrap, and he doesn't know the first thing about buying one. Fortunately, he's come to the right place.

The Rookie isn't in the dressing room for more than a minute before the Prepster materializes to provide that extra bit of customer service. Fit is terribly important it seems, and Prepman sees to it that the fit between his supple lips and the Rookie's young dick is as secure as possible. The next thing you know, they're screwing on the dressing room floor (Porn Potato certainly hopes there aren't any pins hidden in the carpet). Preppymen peels off his power-drag to reveal a smooth, tight, slightly overtanned body and bulging boner, clad in his own jockstrap which he touts as the dressy yet casual garment of the nineties. The Rookie himself is a fey young thing, with approachable good looks and nice abs. Porn Potato likes that. What's more, he manages to pull off an aw-shucks boyish nervousness despite being the jaded pornqueen that he is. Porn Potato likes that, too. When the time comes for the Rookie

to pay for the serv... uh, the merchandise, Preppymen magnanimously gives him the supporter, one jock lover to another.

Now things get interesting, with Rookieboy on the field practicing football moves with his older brother. The brother is positively primordial, a hybrid between an advertisement for racial purity and the missing link. The two bicker in the early morning, Rookie asking Link things like "Do you have to touch my balls like that?" (If that bothers him, wait until he sees what happens to you when you score a touchdown.) Link, disgusted with such silliness, stalks off to the men's room, where the moment of truth awaits. While piddling, Link notices that his baby brother isn't wearing a cup. Rookieboy counters that his big bro' is getting a hardon. "What do you expect," Link grumbles, "...getting



me up so early... I didn't have time to take care of myself." They decide to forget the morning practice entirely and focus on this more pressing need.

They lose their jerseys but keep their armor on, making them look like PVC gladiators. Link is built solid, seemingly as wide as tall, with one really captivating trait: his dick has the same color, texture, and flexibility as those cheap pink dildoes one sees in the smut shops. "Do you wanna kiss?" asks the Rookie. "I dunno... do you?" responds Link. "Do you wanna sixty-nine?" the Rookie inquires later. "I dunno... do you?" Link answers. Then one of them finds a rubber in the other's shoe (in a shoe?). "Ever fuck with a rubber before?" the Rookie queries. "I dunno... have you?" And then, while sucking on Link's dick with all the relish of a Tootsie-Pop, the Rookie bats his eyes and innocently responds, "Nooooo...?" So not only does Link lift Rookieboy's ankle and penetrate his end-zone, but he smooches his little brother through the Rookie's jockstrap. Now that's teamwork!

Now we cut to the locker room, where we finally catch sight of one of those elusive waterboys whose absence the studs are always lamenting. Thinking that no one else is around, Waterboy is busily pilfering the team's soiled supporters. Turns out

that the Preppymonster collects and carefully labels celebrity jockstraps, and he's willing to pay top dollar for them. But Link is rather protective of his jock, which he inherited from his brother in the previous vignette, and so he and Waterboy decide to screw instead. (Waterboy actually manages to pilfer the jock anyway.)

Later on, Swimboy stops by the locker room, where Waterboy helps him shave for the big meet. Swimboy's a little uncomfortable with the necessary intimacy, and tries to lighten the mood with conversation, which only causes things to become more intimate. It turns out that Swimboy is going to audition for a movie, the sort of movie where shaved balls are required, and he was wondering if Waterboy could do a little favor. Waterboy relents

after a little prodding, but then decides that Swimboy should practice his moves before the big screen test. These boys are very similar in build, though Waterboy is quite a bit more swarthy than his film star companion. But what one really notices are the pecs both these guys have. Pecs. Huge pecs. Pecs that project into the next area code. Pecs that loom like thunderheads on the Arizona horizon. What can one say? Porn Potato likes that. Waterboy's got one little



\*Eccl. 1:9. And furthermore: "Again, if two lie together, then they have heat;

but how can one be warm alone?" (Eccl. 4:11, remarkably upbeat considering the source.)

## GET FAT, don't die!

### Biffy Mae's Booze-Poached Pears

1 bottle cheap zinfandel or other  
mild red wine  
1 cup maple syrup (the real stuff, not  
Log Cave-In)  
6-8 large pears, preferably bosc

Peel pears, leaving the stem in place for easier handling. Combine the wine and maple syrup in a heavy pan and heat until simmering. Immerse the pears and poach until tender, between 20 and 30 minutes. Remove pears and set aside. Gently boil syrup another 10 to 15 minutes to thicken a little. Serve pears in a dessert bowl and drizzle with warm syrup. If you want to make these ahead of time, nuke pears to warm them back up.

### Biffy Mae's Curried Potato Salad

3 tablespoons peanut oil or clarified  
butter  
1½ lbs little creamer potatoes, cut into  
bite-sized pieces  
1 or 2 cloves garlic, minced  
1 can coconut milk (unsweetened)  
2-3 tablespoons tom yum or red  
curry paste  
1 bag frozen peas, thawed  
4 hardboiled eggs, peeled and crumbled

Heat oil or clarified butter in a heavy skillet over medium heat. Add the spuds and garlic and sauté for 15 minutes. Add the coconut milk and stir in the curry paste. Cover and simmer for 15 minutes or until the potatoes are tender. Stir in the peas and top with the crumbled egg. A very tasty dish, best served with a crunchy green salad and fresh fruit. (Red curry paste can be found in most Asian supermarkets, along with canned coconut milk.)

problem: an absolutely deadpan style of delivery. Judging from the facial expression alone, you couldn't tell whether he was being ploughed on the massage table, or was dispassionately watching the courtship rituals of Nubian dung beetles. Porn Potato doesn't like that.

As a token of encouragement, Shaveboy now gets the wandering jock to wear during his film debut, of which we only see a glimpse. Shaveboy winds up as a contestant in a local bar's strip contest, along with his cinematic companion, Filmboy. Filmboy's quite a sight! Tall and lanky, with a sinewy physique and a pleasant but not overly attractive face. But he makes up for that by seeming to radiate an incredible aura of sleaze and potent sexuality. Porn Potato really likes that. So too does the audience, which cheers wildly. That is, until the performers get past the stripping and get into the fucking. Suddenly the patrons adopt a look of dread, as though the exits were patrolled by guard dogs and they were afraid their moms might recognize them in the final film.

The two noisily disagree as to who's going to fuck whom on the pool table when Preppyboy bursts onto the scene, wearing nothing but one of his carefully collected heirloom jocks. "I'll fuck you both!" he says, which he does after scaring up some rubbers from the reluctant captive audience. Despite his pushy style, Preppyboy is polymorphously perverse. They bump, grind, and/or sixty-nine in every possible combination, with lots of three-way kisses, which Porn Potato really likes. Finally we fade back to Preppyboy's underwear store, where he is wanking off while wearing the same jockstrap that passed through so many crotches.



Porn Potato still wonders about the horrified look on the patrons' faces.

# A Recipe for Rectal Tarts

(OR, JUST ADD FECES AND STIR)

BY MICHAEL SCARCE

*First concocted in the experimental kitchens of "Dr." Paul Cameron's Family Research Institute, this recipe is perfect for today's busy and healthy lifestyle. It's a steamy dish sure to become a chosen-family favorite!*

His name is Chef Paul Cameron, culinary wiz of our day. Promiscuity and gay men make his moral dish quite gourmet.

He cooks up hazards of queerness, finding danger in tarts of fruit—recipes of peril from the Family Research Institute.

"The rectum is a mixing bowl" for a rich medley of disease—chosen-family favorites, made for multiple guests with ease.

Rectal tarts are guilty pleasures much more decadent than Sodom. Their heat is sure to be scorching, so take care to grease the bottom.

And please don't forget the rimming, or the bowl just won't be the same. Clean-as-you-go is the rule here, and hygiene is the name of the game.

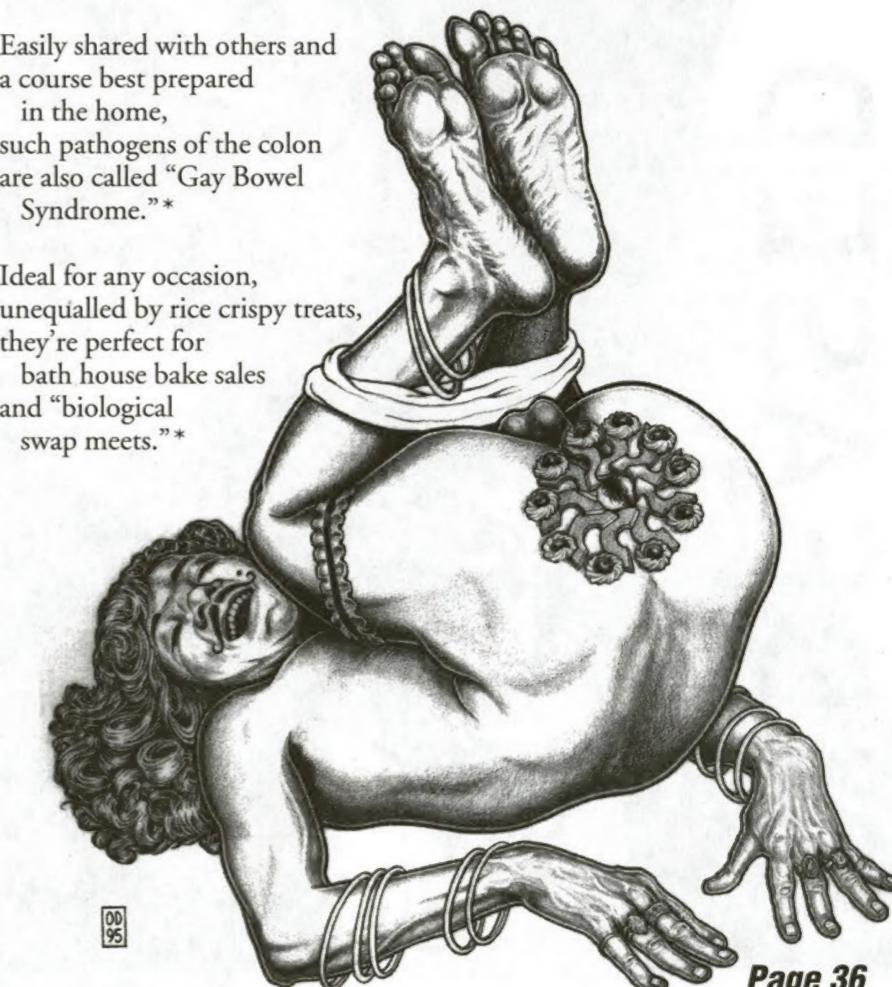
Next, blend together a mishmash of semen, lube and saliva. This confection of infection is much sweeter than Godiva.

Allow to rise until the stick which is inserted comes out clean. Avoid overbrowning the top; this results in Tarts à Latrine.

Sprinkle the top with parasites. (Amoebas will do in a pinch.) With incubation in minutes, these savory snacks are a cinch!

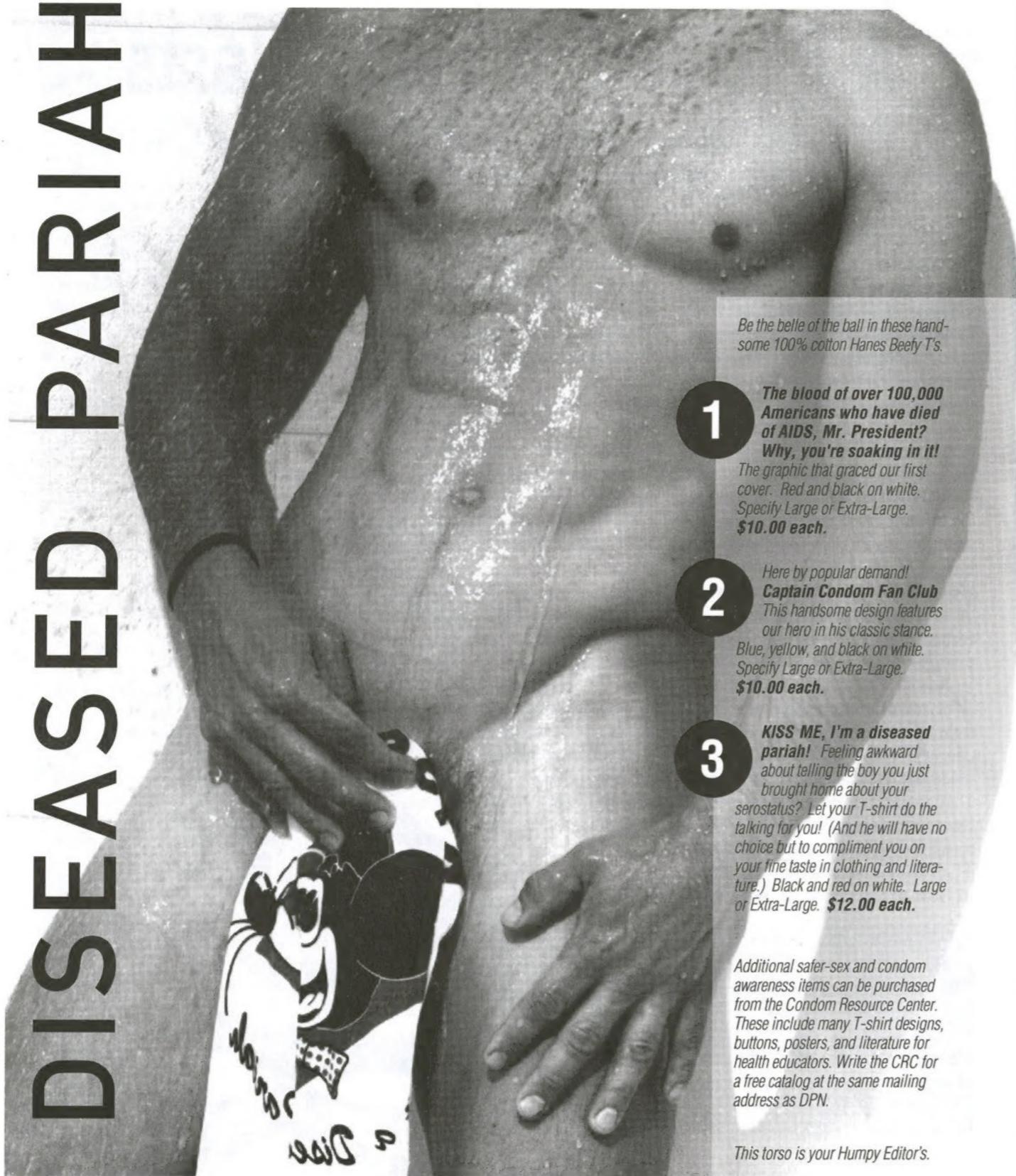
Easily shared with others and a course best prepared in the home, such pathogens of the colon are also called "Gay Bowel Syndrome."\*

Ideal for any occasion, unequalled by rice crispy treats, they're perfect for bath house bake sales and "biological swap meets."\*



\*These statements and phrases are quoted directly from the pamphlet "Medical Consequences of What Homosexuals Do", written by (not a real) "Dr." Paul Cameron and published by the right-wing homophobe scapegoating organization, the Family Research Institute, 1993.

# DISEASED PARIAH



Page 37

You can get laid—just ask the editors how.

*Be the belle of the ball in these handsome 100% cotton Hanes Beefy T's.*

**1**

*The blood of over 100,000 Americans who have died of AIDS, Mr. President? Why, you're soaking in it!*  
The graphic that graced our first cover. Red and black on white. Specify Large or Extra-Large. \$10.00 each.

**2**

*Here by popular demand! Captain Condom Fan Club*  
This handsome design features our hero in his classic stance. Blue, yellow, and black on white. Specify Large or Extra-Large. \$10.00 each.

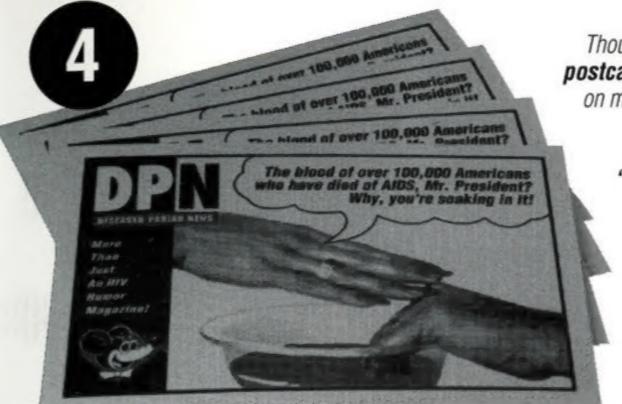
**3**

*KISS ME, I'm a diseased pariah! Feeling awkward about telling the boy you just brought home about your serostatus? Let your T-shirt do the talking for you! (And he will have no choice but to compliment you on your fine taste in clothing and literature.) Black and red on white. Large or Extra-Large. \$12.00 each.*

Additional safer-sex and condom awareness items can be purchased from the Condom Resource Center. These include many T-shirt designs, buttons, posters, and literature for health educators. Write the CRC for a free catalog at the same mailing address as DPN.

This torso is your Humpy Editor's.

**4**



Thought-provoking **DPN** postcards! Red and black on matte finish cardstock. Ask for "You're Soaking in It!" or "Roy & Kimberly". 50¢ each.

**Please note that DPN #4 is no longer available.**

**5**



**HIV Merit Badges.** Now there's no need to argue over who gets the comfiest seat at the support group, because your advanced state of decay will be obvious for all to see! The more merit badges you earn, the higher your standing in the HIV pathotocracy. The following badges are available, with more to come: The classic "Kiss Me, I'm a Diseased Pariah"; T-cell milestones of 500, 200, 100, 50, 20, and 10; CMV retinitis; cryptococcal meningitis; KS; nausea; PCP; peripheral neuropathy; thrush; toxoplasmosis; and "I Survived AZT". 2-1/4 inches in diameter, in a variety of lurid colors. \$1.00 each.

**6**

Tired of those nasty old Trojans but don't know where to turn? Try **Captain Condom's Original Party Pack!** 15 assorted condoms, plus 3 lubricant samples and instructions. \$4.00 each.



## I WANT IT ALL!

- Please **RENEW** my existing subscription for only \$10.00 (US\$12 Canada, US\$20 International).
- Please send me a **NEW SUBSCRIPTION** to DPN (four issues) for only \$10.00 (US\$12 Canada, US\$20 Int'l). Please start me with issue #10, or #11
- Please send me **BACK ISSUES** of DPN for only \$3.00 each (US\$5 Canada, US\$7 Int'l). I would like (please check): #1, #2, #3, #5, #6, #7, #8 and/or #9.

Please send to (print clearly):

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(I certify that I am at least 18 years of age)

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(\_\_ size Large, \_\_ size Extra Large)
- Captain Condom** T-Shirt at \$10.00 each  
(\_\_ size Large, \_\_ size Extra Large)
- Kiss Me...** T-Shirt at \$12.00 each  
(\_\_ size Large, \_\_ size Extra Large)
- DPN postcards** at 50¢ each  
(\_\_ "You're Soaking in It!")  
(\_\_ "Roy and Kimberly")
- HIV merit badges** at \$1.00 each  
"Kiss Me, I'm a Diseased Pariah";  
T-cell milestones of 500, 200, 100, 50,  
20, and 10; CMV retinitis; cryptococcal  
meningitis; KS; nausea; PCP; peripheral  
neuropathy; thrush; toxoplasmosis; and  
"I Survived AZT" [indicate how many of each.]
- Captain Condom's Original Party Pack** at \$4.00 each.

**TOTAL** for merchandise and magazines \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(California residents add appropriate sales tax)

Please make checks out to  
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Whether it was heroin or whoring, AIDS Barbie and **KS Ken** will spend countless hours together arguing over who gave HIV to whom. Then Ken's philandering with Barbie's friends can be aired for all to see. (Uh-oh, has anyone bothered to test Skipper?)

Better hurry, because they can't survive for long!  
Dial 1-800-POZZ-KEN today!